



Forum of Arctic Research Operators

FARO Annual Meeting 2022
26 March 2022, 09:00 - 15:00 (GMT)
Online

Minutes

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

Jennifer Mercer welcomed all participants to this online FARO annual meeting, the second online annual meeting due to the pandemic. It was announced that Russia will not participate in the meeting, as ASSW 2022 is closed for individuals representing Russian institutions, organisations, and businesses both on-site in Tromsø, and online, due to the conflict in Ukraine.

The meeting minutes from annual meeting 2021 were approved without any comments.

The Agenda was approved without any changes.

Quick round of introductions of National Points of Contact (NPOC) and other participants.

Report from the FARO Chair:

1. ExCom meetings were held approx. every other month, but only online as the COVID-19 pandemic prevented all in person conferences in 2021. The ExCom provided regular updates on COVID situations in their respective countries.
2. Engaged with external Review Committee to bring report to finalization.
3. Secretariat engaged with NPOCs through social media, email, etc.
4. Facilitated workshop on International Access to Research Infrastructure in the Arctic (with INTERACT and ARICE) during ASSW 2021. Report will be submitted to Polar Record for publication "International Access to Research Infrastructure in the Arctic", and discusses challenges, good practices, recommendations, and special considerations for ship-based work. Next steps are being developed. A follow-up workshop was cancelled

when ASSW 2022 went hybrid, but possibly panel events at upcoming meetings over this next year will be planned.

5. FARO presented, with Åsa Lindgren, at Arctic Shipping Best Practices Information Forum.

This FARO annual meeting was scheduled on a Saturday, which is problematic for many people, especially those with children at home. FARO supports a better work-life balance and will bring this concern to IASC, to avoid business meetings on weekends in the future.

2. One Ocean Summit & Polar Symposium Summary (Prof Dr Antje Boetius)

The One Ocean summit was held in France in February 2022 with heads of States, and although it is global the polar regions were given great space. The Polar Oceans workshop was held on February 9 with the aim to convey ideas for polar oceans in the context of climate change. Three topics were discussed:

1. Polar ocean trends, dynamics and their connection to energy, ice sheet and C balances

We should think Antarctic and Arctic in parallel – polar oceans are connected and are critical: Carbon and heat uptake mitigate climate change. As at least one ice free summer before 2050 is expected in the Arctic and we must be prepared.

2. Life in polar seas: trends, threats and solutions.

The life connects the polar seas – understanding life dynamics and function in polar seas are the key contribution to the One Ocean concept. Protecting the biodiversity.

3. Governance of polar oceans

“The new EU Arctic policy commits to a stronger EU engagement for a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous Arctic. This engagement shall be based on solid science and research in cooperation with all relevant actors on an international level.” (written early February 2022).

Key conclusion: we have ONE ocean and we note that there are fragmented governance and management systems in both Polar Regions that need to be overcome rapidly, and reinforced through tools such as scientific cooperation, cooperation in infrastructure and marine spatial sampling. The need for international polar missions were seen as a contribution to global knowledge on polar regions, training of next generations, and science diplomacy.

Three ideas from this workshop:

- International polar year (2032/2033) (IASC).
- Polar decade.
- Synchronous Antarctic Observation (2027-2028).

3. Updates from Countries

Japan: Researchers and technical staff successfully visited Ny-Ålesund, supported by the Norwegian Polar Institute, but numbers of visitors was limited during the pandemic. The Arctic Data archive System

(ADS) collects observation data and modeling products obtained by various Japanese research projects and gives researchers access to the results. Construction process ongoing for a new Arctic Research Vessel scheduled to be completed and in service in 2026.

Switzerland: Arctic Century Expedition 2021 – an international multidisciplinary expedition in the Russian Arctic in 2021 with 59 scientists from 15 different institutions and 17 nationalities. Two new polar programs: 1) Greenfjord (Greenlandic Fjord Ecosystems in a changing climate) and 2) PAMIR: Towards an interdisciplinary understanding of climate change impacts on the third pole. COVID impact: flexibility by funders, communication in and around projects, agility and quicker turn-around times for scientists, increased risk-management awareness, sharing data/resources, collaboration (local/international), CO₂ awareness.

Canada: Covid-19 hit hard in Canada due to the remoteness and travel was almost not possible. Research community has not been together for a long time. Now the situation gets better and there will be more travel and activity in 2022. Some stations were closed, while a few facilities were open. Permanent staff has been in charge of the long-term experiments. Kluane Lake has a new hydroponic system and can grow fresh produce.

China: Almost all projects in 2021 was moved to 2022 due to Covid. Only one project was possible. The station CIAO in Iceland had no visits in 2021. Two research vessels will hopefully be sent to the Arctic in 2022 to catch up for last years, but there are still restrictions.

Denmark: Technical University of Denmark is planning the construction of a new research vessel for operations in the waters around Denmark and Greenland. The ship is planned to start operation in 2026. DMI Geophysical Observatory in Qaanaaq and ARTEK Research Station in Sisimiut has opened up as research stations providing field accommodation to scientists. All research stations in Greenland were to a different degree affected by COVID with a reduced number of guests. Arctic Research Hub in Greenland is launched – connects people, institutions, and countries within research, see <https://arctichub.gl/>

France: new partnership with Canada – exchange of services between Amundsen Science (Canada) and the French Oceanographic Fleet. Agreement signed Feb. 2022. New opportunity with the French Icebreaker “Le Commandant Charcot” – a private tour operator. Space for up to 4 scientists onboard, free of charge.

4. Updates from Countries continued

Germany: Polarstern was able to conduct expeditions in 2021, with some quarantine. Will also continue expeditions in 2022. Heincke Arctic Expeditions did not have any activity in 2021 but will have one expedition in 2022. More winter projects will be conducted in the future. All cooperation with Russian stations is cut off, which will impact the long-lasting cooperation and data series.

Iceland: not any big impact of covid-19 in Iceland. In 2021, Icelandic government released an Arctic policy (Þingskjal1273-750 mál) with 19 focal points. Arctic policy strategic plan to be developed in 2022 in collaboration with research institutes, universities, NGO's and all interested entities.

Italy: stations have been running all year. Low numbers of visitors in 2020 but almost back to normal in 2021. New version of the Italian [Arctic Data Center](#) is available. Covid challenges and solutions: organization of the campaigns during lockdown took more time, postponement of many activities, support from locals. International travelling required testing, quarantine, support letters. Shipping: having reduced availability of flights, alternative carriers (e.g., tourist boats). With the increasing vaccination levels and introduction of digital certification (summer 2021), the restrictions to travels were gradually removed.

UK: NERC station has been closed completely for 2 years. Hope for a normal season now. More equipment bought/updated, new boat and vehicles. New program for Canada starting – signed MoU with partners. Cruise planned for 2023 - open to researchers.

Korea: Arctic Research campaign in 2021 was conducted but scaled-down due to limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic situation. All Arctic fieldwork participants were encouraged to get COVID-19 vaccination according to Korean government's guideline. ARAON supported 10 ocean science research projects in the area of Bering / Chuckchi / East-Siberian Sea by three science Cruise legs. Four research groups with 14 scientists at Arctic Dasan station, Ny-Åleund in 2021. One research group with 14 international scientists visited at Kangerlussuaq, Greenland for conducting drone-based test flight campaign in September 2021.

Netherlands: Cancellation of fieldwork to mostly Siberian tundra sites, large impacts on projects (2-year delay), currently even more pressing due to Ukraine conflict. Some monitoring and measurements could be continued by local partners. In other cases, fieldwork locations could be moved to other Arctic locations (Svalbard). Monitoring at Ny-Ålesund could be continued both in summer 2020 and 2021, although at higher costs for quarantine, permits and insurance.

Norway: Norwegian contribution to international "Synoptic Arctic Survey". The Nansen Legacy (2018-2023) conducted 8 cruises in 2021. Covid impact on activity less pronounced in 2021 vs 2020: Easing of restrictions, increased willingness by researchers to spend time in quarantine prior to

travelling to Svalbard and Ny-Ålesund. Travel restrictions lifted and activity moving towards a normal situation. Activity by Asian institutions still at a lower level than pre-Covid. New EU project FACE-IT aims to enable adaptive co-management of social-ecological fjord systems in the Arctic in the face of rapid cryosphere and biodiversity changes.

Portugal: As Portugal does not have infrastructure in the Arctic, they just need to manage the projects during the pandemic. Three projects out of 8 were successful in 2020-2021 in Iceland and the Barents deep sea. Most projects in 2022 will be projects that have been postponed from previous years.

Poland: In February 2022, the Polish Prime Minister appointed an inter-ministerial Committee for the National Polar Policy. Activities in 2022 will mainly focus on Svalbard region, but three new projects will also be implemented in Greenland. Marine litter cleanup: 5 Polish scientists and volunteers collected samples and macro-plastic in Svalbard.

Sweden: The Synoptic Arctic survey postponed from 2020 took place in 2021 in a successful expedition: Vaccination mandatory (if possible), 8 days of isolated individual quarantine prior to expedition. Abisko Scientific Research Station: Reduced number of visiting scientists, limited contacts between the science groups, and Covid routines and handling plans. 2022 plans: Terrestrial Field Campaigns: 1) Eocene climate change record in East Greenland, Constable Point, 2) Tectonic coupling of the Yukon-Koyukuk and Canada Basins. I/B Oden: ArcOp2022 (planning affected).

USA: Achieved goal of NOT being a COVID-19 vector into Arctic. Utilized rigorous testing, Infection Protection Equipment (IPE), and mandatory quarantines. Zero positive cases out of over 100 personnel deployed to Greenland. Established a Cepheid PCR test lab in Kangerlussuaq to support program requirements without straining local resources. Arctic Section Field Activity and Contractor Support was low in 2020 and 2021 with several cancelled projects and more remote sampling. Expect a normal season in 2022. IARPC 5-year [Arctic Research Plan](#) 2022-2026 recently released.

5. Special Topics – open discussion

- A. Recognizing cultural differences in international fieldwork.
- B. Including science support on expedition vessels, challenges/opportunities.
- C. Communicating international Arctic cooperation to the general public/media.
- D. New INTERACT report presentation (APECS, 5 minutes).

Some of these topics are a continuation from previous years and the discussions will continue in future meetings.

A. At the last annual meeting in 2021, we had a presentation from Toolik about “promoting an inclusive work environment in the field” by Syndonia Bret-Harte. Different cultures in different countries may result in a clash of cultures in the field or on a vessel. One discussion point could be how do we make early career scientists aware of cultural differences? IASC Working Groups focus a lot on inclusive science and several workshops will take place this year.

B. Nice example from France – cooperation with private tour operator. Work in progress in France – suggestion that FARO take over this role and outline an approach of how we could work with private tour operators, discussion about ‘green washing’ in these types of cooperation, and how to share data coming from these cooperation. Will be discussed by the ExCom. Look into how it is done in Antarctica. Specific task in INTERACT about this – working with AECO and how to facilitate the cooperation. The report will be shared with the FARO community when it is ready, probably late summer 2022.

C. This agenda point was made before the conflict in Ukraine – so the discussion about this has likely changed now. Suggestions include: open meetings like this FARO annual meeting is a good chance for people to get a glimpse of what is going on in the Arctic.

D. Presentation not made (no APECS representative present) – Guidebook currently under layout – deliverable can be found here: <https://eu-interact.org/app/uploads/2022/03/D2.7.pdf>.

6. FARO review and evaluation of FARO – including Review Committee Representatives

Overview, discussion with Review Committee Chair/Representatives, evaluation of report

Heinz Miller, the chair of the review committee presented the review report. The current review is the first of its kind for FARO despite its more than 20-year history and an intent to carry out reviews at 5-year intervals. Recommendations from the review include:

Networking functions of FARO are highly valued; however, survey responses and analysis of available materials suggest that FARO membership would benefit from greater interaction beyond these core meetings. e.g., enhanced curation of website.

Clearly identifying the core stakeholders of FARO and creating opportunities for enhanced communication or interaction with these. FARO could establish closer links with both science and

infrastructure communities such as IASC and IASC working groups, regional science and logistics organisations (e.g., EPB, PAG, AFOPS) and thematic infrastructure networks (INTERACT, ARICE), and the FARO leadership already has identified potential synergies. Closer ties to APECS could also help build capacity for future logistics and stronger couplings between science and logistics.

FARO information should be shared more broadly (even to non-operator countries) through mailing lists, newsletters, reports, news releases to other Arctic organizations. NPOCs should be better encouraged to share news via email within the community (e.g., internal newsletter).

FARO could play a larger role in Arctic Policy issues, e.g., in implementing Arctic Council's Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic, by e.g., joining science agreement meetings and sharing info on national points of contacts to the agreements.

Scientific Cooperation.

FARO could consider a bigger role in facilitating access, sharing of logistics and campaign planning, by e.g., sharing information and plans, and play a role in coordination.

FARO could consider developing best practices from member countries, incl. e.g., how to deal with COVID.

FARO Secretariat delivers what can be expected with the present budget and there is no room for new activities. Increased activity levels could therefore necessitate increased annual fees.

The review committee encourages FARO to:

- build on its strengths and unique qualities (providing a great Forum for exchange of information, its multidisciplinary and geographical coverage).
- formulate a clear mandate for its future work taking the recommendations provided into account.
- evolve and adjust to changing conditions and demands for Arctic operations.

The review committee highlights the importance for FARO to conduct these reviews every 5 years in the future.

Way forward: FARO's role in Arctic cooperation in 5 years:

1. Be more visible and relevant in coordinating Arctic operations between countries.
2. Become a coordinating forum.
3. Serve as an authoritative resource.
4. Create more specialized and active working groups.
5. Continue to pass information across international borders.
6. Work on improved consideration of environmental impacts of research.

7. Internal business (Jennifer Mercer, FARO Chair, 60 minutes)

i. FARO only discussion of Review Report

FARO members acknowledged the content of the review report and agreed to initiate a process for developing a 5-year strategy addressing the issues raised by the review and the FARO ToR. This effort will be initiated by the FARO Secretariat with assistance of the FARO ExCom. A draft strategy will be distributed and discussed among all FARO members.

ii. The FARO Secretariat - 2021 finance report

Invoices for the annual fee 2022 will be sent out in April 2022.

Financial report: Our income in 2021 was as expected as all 19 member countries have paid the annual fee income 2021: 28.499 euro). The expenditure was 17279 euro. This means that the balance of the year is 11,220 euro, and 51,430 euro is carried over to 2022.

Due to the pandemic, there was no travel in 2021, and the only expenses were the online participation fee for ASSW 2021, and staff time. There were also less hours used in the FARO secretariat compared to the available budget.

The FARO organisational review was slightly delayed, so the honorarium for the review committee was carried over to 2022. Therefore, there were no expenses under 'other direct costs' in 2021.

The FARO review is now finalised and the honorarium for the review committee is being paid in 2022.

iii. 2022 budget

For 2022 the secretariat hopes to increase the level of activity by attending conferences again. The travel budget is set at the same level as in previous years (before the pandemic).

Other direct costs: The cost for the review was set to 6000 euro and is now spent in 2022.

Overall - the total budgeted expenses are in line with the expected income in 2022.

iv. Discussion about the large financial buffer

FARO has a cumulative balance carried over to 2022 (buffer) of 51.430 euro. It was suggested that the use of all or some of this buffer should be discussed thoroughly before any decision is made. ExCom, NPOCs and FARO community should discuss how to best spend the money.

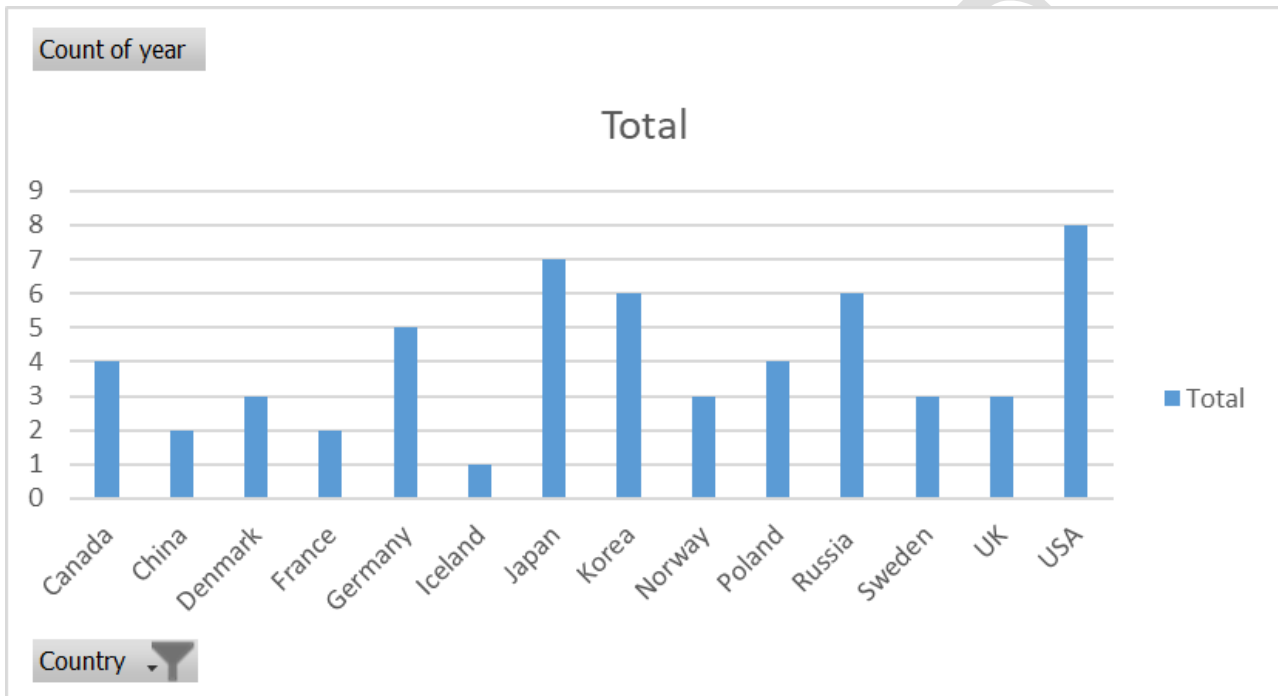
Some of the money could for example be used for hiring an intern to find information for FARO; a 'webmaster' for info search, and maybe also make a newsletter. Funding of early career scientists to join ASSW 2023 in Vienna is also an option – reserve 5-10.000 euro for this. Raise the profile of FARO within the community.

Action point

For now, FARO should save the money. Look at the recommendations from the review. FARO ExCom should then come up with some actions points and proposals for how to use these funds.

v. Overview of historical representation on ExCom

The FARO secretariat reviewed the minutes from the last 10 years of annual meetings. All ExCom members were identified and a list was compiled showing each year of the members in ExCom and their nationalities. USA has had an ExCom member in total 8 years. Japan and Korea are next with 7 and 6 years, respectively. Iceland is the newest ExCom member, having joined ExCom at the annual meeting in 2021.



Countries that have served as ExCom since 2021.

Countries who have not had an ExCom member in FARO, and where there may be some hidden potential candidates are:

- Czech Republic
- Finland
- Italy
- The Netherlands
- Portugal
- Switzerland

vi. Election of FARO ExCom members for the period 2022-2025.

Members with terms expiring:

Morten Rasch

Jerome Chappellaz (stepping down)

A big thank you to Morten and Jerome for their time in ExCom.

FARO is looking for two new ExCom members.

Daniele from Switzerland has agreed to be nominated (not present). Daan Blok from The Netherlands was also nominated, and accepted. The ExCom now consist of:

ExCom members, continuing terms

Jennifer Mercer (Chair, 2021-2024), USA

Takuji Nakamura (2021-2024), Japan

Anna Ólafsdóttir (2021-2024), Iceland

New members:

Danièle Rod (2022-2025), Switzerland

Daan Blok (2022-2025), The Netherlands

vii. Next FARO Annual meeting (Vienna 17-24 February 2023)

Next meeting will hopefully be in person in Austria. FARO will work on getting the meeting on a week day only.

viii. Any other business

Nothing to report.