



Second Biannual Meeting of the SAON Board

Potsdam, Germany

1-2 October 2012

The second biannual meeting of the SAON Board was graciously hosted by the SAON co-sponsor, the International Arctic Science Council (IASC). The meeting included representatives from all eight Arctic countries, one of the Arctic Council's Permanent Participants (ICC), the non-Arctic countries, including China, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea and Poland, international organizations such as the World Meteorological Organization, nine of the SAON task leaders, and the SAON Secretariat (including the Chair, Vice Chair and three secretariat members).

The first and largest order of business centered around brief reports by all of the SAON tasks on their progress to date in achieving their goals, related to either observation assets coordination or integrated data delivery, or both. With the exception of one task, all were deemed to be sufficiently meeting their goals; the last task, on space assets' coordination, was deemed to be insufficient in meeting stated goals, mainly due to a change in the sponsoring agency's high-level direction-setting. This task has been redirected from its original lead (Canadian Space Agency) to the United States and the Arctic Change Project, where it will have greater synergy and operational support.

The second order of business was on the establishment of a high-level SAON strategy for setting overarching goals and objectives over the entire SAON portfolio. The Chair and Vice-Chair wrote a one-page white paper that described the strategic framework, including its identified mission and potential value-added, and linked this to a set of strategic actions that SAON can take in order to provide value back to the individual tasks as well as value-added products, information, outreach, etc., to the wide array of stakeholders. To this end, the SAON participants were divided into three working groups (data management, task coordination, and community-based monitoring) for a two-hour breakout session with the goal of each group providing more detailed information that will be synthesized by the Chair and Vice-Chair into the existing strategic framework document. This will provide SAON with a short and concise strategic plan that aligns high-level network product generation with the various SAON tasks and ultimately allow for the evaluation of tasks in the context of SAON's strategic goals.

The third and final order of business was to provide an overview of the status of the SAON Terms of Reference (ToR) and Rules of Procedure (RoP). Prior to the meeting, the SAON Chair had sent out a letter to the participants to inform them that after a very lengthy process of interaction with interested parties (most of the PPs from the USA and Canada), a compromise draft of both the ToR and the RoP had been developed. In addition, since not everyone would be satisfied with the exact language of either document, the SAON Chair was evoking an 'adaptive management' process in which the existing ToR/RoP would be accepted at this time to allow for the implementation and forward movement of SAON with the knowledge that these documents would be open for comments and change during each two-year SAON program review, the first of which is slated to start during the late summer or early autumn of 2013. All of the voting members present (including the country and PP representatives) agreed to this method.