



Arctic Council SAO plenary meeting (eDocs code: ACSAOUS203)
5-6 October 2016, Portland, Maine, U.S.A.

Document Title

Update on ACS Activities in 2016

Agenda item number

4.3

Submitted by

Arctic Council Secretariat

Document filename

EDOCS-3738-v5A-

ACSAOUS203_Portland_2016_4-3_Update_on_ACS_activities.PDF

Number of pages, not including this cover sheet

11

Type (e.g. report, progress report, etc.)

Progress report

Update on ACS Activities in 2016

Submitted by the ACS Director

SAO Portland, Maine 5-6 October 2016

Introduction

This report gives an update on the Arctic Council Secretariat's (ACS) activities in 2016 (through August 2016). The ACS's activities have supported the approved functions of the ACS as described in the work plan approved at the SAO meeting in Whitehorse 4-5 March 2015, while also addressing other emerging requests from SAOs and the Chairmanship. On 1 January 2016, the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat (IPS) joined the ACS. Its main task is to support the work of the Permanent Participants (PPs) in the Arctic Council.

In general, the ACS is comfortably on track with the tasks in its approved work plan, and expenditures are within the approved budget for 2016. The same applies to the IPS and its work plan and budget for 2016.

1. Administrative and organizational support

The ACS has worked closely with the U.S. Chairmanship supporting their leadership of the Arctic Council. This work includes daily email contact and weekly telephone contact to discuss a wide range of topics from meeting preparations to preparation of necessary background information for the Council's ongoing work. The cooperation between the "Washington team" and the Tromsø team has been excellent at all levels. In addition, the ACS has started discussions with Finland about the upcoming Finnish Chairmanship, and has begun to offer some support for their preparatory work. The incoming Finnish Chairmanship team has visited the ACS in Tromsø to discuss future cooperation, and team members from the ACS have travelled to Finland to join "scouting expeditions" to review possible meeting venues and make plans for the different meetings that are being planned for the Finnish Chairmanship period. The ACS has also provided support to the Arctic States and PPs, as well as to Observers (in accordance with the Observer Manual). Support to subsidiary bodies is described below.

Senior Arctic Officials' meetings

Preparatory work for the March 2016 SAO meeting has been shared between the ACS and the Chairmanship, working in close cooperation with one another. The ACS has provided support in developing agendas, logistics and practical preparations, as well as assisting the

SAO Chair in daily correspondence. The ACS also coordinates the distribution of SAO meeting documents and updates the password-protected meeting website designed for the meeting delegates.

Amarok: the Arctic Council tracker

The Arctic Council's tool for tracking current and past projects (Amarok) was created during the Canadian Chairmanship. Early in the U.S. Chairmanship, the ACS converted the Amarok from Excel to Access, making updates and reporting easier. Thus far, Working Groups, Task Forces, and Expert Groups have been updating their entries in the Amarok prior to each SAO meeting. The ACS collects and enters any updates, and then prepares reports for the SAO meetings.

OSPAR informational document

With contributions from the Working Groups, the ACS prepared a three-page document describing the Arctic Council's structure, its work in the Arctic marine environment, and the particular efforts of AMAP, CAFF, EPPR, PAME, the U.S. Chairmanship, and the Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation (TFAMC) in this subject area. The document was delivered to OSPAR on the occasion of their meeting in Tenerife, 20-24 June 2016, and was accompanied by a virtual presentation by the SAO Chair.

Arctic Council long-term planning

In accordance with the decision taken at the SAO executive meeting in Fairbanks in March 2016, the ACS has compiled and circulated materials to assist in consideration of the development of an overarching strategic plan for the Arctic Council. The work done by the ACS has included:

- An overview of guidance on long-term priorities drawn from earlier decisions by the Arctic Council (including the Ottawa Declaration, the Vision for the Arctic, and other strategic statements or guidance contained in the nine Ministerial declarations);
- An appendix including long-term strategic documents developed by the Working Groups; and
- A summary of strategic planning documents adopted by select international bodies that have developed their own strategic plans or programs.

Observer review

During the year 2016, roughly half of the Arctic Council's Observers are being reviewed. The Senior Arctic Officials tasked a group of "deputy SAOs" and PP representatives to prepare and conduct the review and to produce a proposal/report containing recommendations for the SAOs' consideration. As instructed by the SAOs, the ACS has supported the group of

“deputy SAOs and PP representatives” in this work, and has kept in contact throughout the process both with the group and with all the Observers that are being reviewed. Among other tasks, the ACS facilitated teleconferences, compiled all the Observer reports as they came in, kept track of submitted material, and developed a summary of the reports for consideration by the group of “deputy SAOs” and PP representatives.

Economic development work for Canada

In accordance with the decision taken at the SAO executive meeting in Fairbanks in March 2016, the ACS has worked with Canada to provide an overview of those elements of the Arctic Council’s work that could reasonably be said to have an “economic dimension”.

Russian language service

The ACS has provided written translation of meeting documents and selected reports from English to Russian and vice-versa. For example:

- Meeting documents for SAO meetings in Fairbanks and Portland;
- All drafts of the *Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation* and other meeting documents for the SCTF;
- Documents for the 3rd and 4th TFAMC meetings;
- AMAP’s summary reports for policy-makers (Arctic Pollution Issues 2015 and Arctic Climate Issues 2015);
- Documents for the Working Groups ACAP, CAFF, and SDWG.

Furthermore, the Russian version of the Arctic Council website has been consistently maintained and updated. The ACS has also provided assistance in correspondence and communication with Russian partners. In addition, the Russian language adviser has attended a number of Task Force meetings and other Arctic Council meetings during 2016 in order to provide simultaneous interpretation. Requests for interpretation and translation services from the ACS have been growing; this demand is especially high from the Task Forces. In 2016, the Russian language adviser has compiled an English-Russian glossary of the acronyms and abbreviations related to the Arctic Council’s work.

Coordination with Working Group Chairs and executive secretaries

Coordination with the Arctic Council Working Groups is a priority of the ACS. In close cooperation with the U.S. Chairmanship, the ACS has continued to work to improve the overall coordination of all activities within the Arctic Council. During the year 2016 so far, the SAO Chair (supported by the ACS) has held one breakfast meeting (March 2016, Fairbanks) and one teleconference (June 2016) with the Working Group Chairs and executive secretaries. At the request of the SAOs, a larger process was initiated to get a better overview of the funding of Arctic Council bodies and projects. To work toward this

overview, the ACS worked with all the Working Groups and submitted background material to the Chairmanship.

Coordination of teleconferences and videoconferences

The ACS regularly hosts teleconferences and videoconferences both for the Chairmanship and for a variety of Working Groups, Task Forces, and other subsidiary bodies. The SAO Chair has used this resource to hold virtual meetings both with the ACS and with the Working Groups. The ACS now has the equipment (purchased using special funding from the U.S. in 2014) and experience needed to host teleconferences or videoconferences for up to 25 participants.

2. The Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat

The Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat (IPS) was relocated on 1 January 2016 to Tromsø, Norway from Copenhagen, Denmark.

A board of nine members governs IPS. All six Arctic Council PPs are board members. The remaining three board members are (1) a representative from the current Chair of the Arctic Council, (2) a representative from the incoming Chair of the Arctic Council, and (3) a representative of the host country of the ACS (Norway). The chairmanship of the board rotates among the PPs. The IPS board chair will preside over the IPS board from the conclusion of one Ministerial meeting until the conclusion of the next. For the period of 2015-2017, the Gwich'In Council International is serving as chair of the IPS board.

The Kingdom of Denmark and Norway provide core funding for IPS activities. In addition, the IPS seeks other funding sources for, *inter alia*, project and travel costs for the PPs.

Core IPS activities

The IPS supports and facilitates the participation of the Arctic Council PPs in their work at the Council. The IPS also provides support functions to the PPs (primarily in Arctic Council activities) and facilitates the presentation of the perspectives of indigenous peoples in the Council's Working Groups and in meetings of SAOs and Ministers.

On a practical level, these tasks are conducted by offering logistical arrangements for meetings, translating relevant documents into Russian, drafting meeting documents and reports, and fundraising for common PP projects, but also by being the project-owner of common PP projects.

The relocation process from Copenhagen to Tromsø has required considerable effort from the IPS in 2016.

IPS-led projects

The IPS is currently responsible for three main projects.

Since 2015, exploring the possibility of establishing an Arctic PP funding mechanism has been a main strategic priority for the IPS board. The IPS contracted the Institute of the North to develop a business plan for the funding mechanism, and implementation of the plan has been the main activity in 2016. The IPS hosted a working meeting in Helsinki in June, which all six PPs attended. Members of the Arctic Funders' Collaborative fund the project.

The second IPS project is to develop an online story map of the PPs' achievements in the Arctic Council. The IPS contracted GRID-Arendal to develop the project. The Nordic Council of Ministers is funding the project.

The third project is an IPS Instagram photo contest. It is a joint project between the IPS and the ACS. The three aims of the project are to (1) engage Arctic indigenous hobby and youth photographers, (2) increase awareness about the Arctic Council and the role of the PPs, and (3) gather images and personal stories from people living in the Arctic to share with the world.

IPS is currently exploring how the IPS web page can be upgraded in order to ensure maximum user-friendliness, compatibility and stability.

3. Website and communications

Over the course of 2016, the ACS has worked in close cooperation with the U.S. Chairmanship to develop the Arctic Council's communications.

- The ACS continued to update all ACS-hosted websites and maintain backups to avoid data loss. The ACS also upgraded from a shared hosting environment to a virtual hosted server to minimize the risk of security threats.
- As outlined in the budget for 2016, the ACS and IPS have developed a joint photo project to gather more photos of the PP delegations. The project also includes an IPS Instagram photo contest and an effort to purchase photos from indigenous photographers for Arctic Council use.
- The Arctic Council website recorded more than 55,000 unique visitors from 1 January to 1 August 2016. Of the thirteen articles published during that time, the most-read article was the post-meeting media release following the Fairbanks SAO meeting, which was read by more than 1,150 unique users.
- The ACS worked to expand the Arctic Council's reach on social media. Since 1 January 2016, the Arctic Council has added more than 1,800 Twitter followers, and more than 800 Facebook followers. In addition, subscribership to the Arctic Council's media release distribution list now stands at more than 800.
- The ACS continued to provide a monthly overview of Arctic Council communications, and deliver it to all States, PPs, Working Groups, and Observers. In addition, the ACS

has redesigned the specific monthly statistics reports for the SDWG, EPPR, and ARR websites which are sent to the Chairs and Executive Secretaries.

- The ACS continued to provide ongoing multilingual media monitoring and provide a regular newsletter with selected headlines from around the globe.
- In close cooperation with the Chairmanship, the ACS worked to arrange small press conferences with the SAO Chair immediately following SAO meetings, in addition to small, off-the-record conversations with Arctic Council principals for hand-picked scholars, analysts, and journalists.
- As instructed by SAOs, the ACS worked with the U.S. Chairmanship and the Arctic Council's communications and outreach group during spring and summer of 2016 to prepare an updated communications strategy for the Arctic Council. The updated strategy is presented for SAOs' consideration at the October 2016 SAO meeting in Portland, Maine.
- The ACS worked with the Chairmanship and the communications and outreach group to prepare and present a set of communications guidelines. These were approved at the Arctic Council's SAO meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska in spring of 2016.
- The ACS prepared a slide show of photographs from the Arctic Council's first 20 years. The slide show can be seen here: <https://vimeo.com/155366527>

Some highlights:

- The most successful Facebook post on the Arctic Council page during this period was the 20th anniversary photograph taken in Fairbanks, Alaska. It was viewed more than 47,000 times, clicked more than 800 times, "liked" 169 times, and shared 59 times. This is the Arctic Council's most successful Facebook post ever by an enormous margin.
- The most successful tweet from the @ArcticCouncil account during this period was a link to the report *The Sea Ice Never Stops: Circumpolar Inuit Reflections on Sea Ice Use and Shipping in Inuit Nunaat*. It was clicked 55 times and retweeted 27 times.

20th Anniversary

The ACS set up a modest webpage dedicated to the 20th anniversary, and (with assistance and contributions from Canada, in particular) prepared and published a 20th anniversary video slide show. The ACS has also planned some additional materials to be printed or published on the website on and around 19 September 2016, and has acquired a limited license to use an image of the signing of the Ottawa Declaration for purposes related to the 20th anniversary.

4. Support to Working Groups and Subsidiary Bodies

Secretariat for ACAP and EPPR

Since February 2014 the secretariats for ACAP and EPPR have been housed within the auspices of the ACS. In 2016, the executive secretary for ACAP and EPPR provided support to, and facilitated the meetings of, ACAP and EPPR. ACAP has met twice, in February 2016 in Washington D.C. and in September 2016 in Krasnoyarsk, Russia. To date, EPPR has had one meeting in Montreal, Canada. This meeting included the second functional tabletop exercise of the MOSPA agreement and the first meeting of the newly established SAR Expert Group. The next EPPR meeting will take place in December 2016 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Reporting and intersessional work for ACAP and EPPR is coordinated by the executive secretary, including communication with the U.S. Chairmanship, the other Working Groups of the Arctic Council, and additional tasks that are assigned by the director of the ACS.

The support the ACAP and EPPR secretariat provided includes: working closely with the ACAP and EPPR Chairs on a daily basis; working with hosts to make logistical arrangements for meetings; distributing and archiving documents as appropriate and directed by the Chairs; maintaining current distribution lists for the Working Group and associated Expert Groups; drafting meeting minutes and reports; managing core Working Group documents; assisting in meetings; and maintaining the ACAP and EPPR webpages.

ACAP and EPPR hope to have secured new “visual identities” before the end of 2016. The ACAP/EPPR secretariat, in cooperation with the communications lead at the ACS, are working with a local design studio in Tromsø to develop a fresh look for both Working Groups that will be used in all electronic and print materials from 2017.

Support to Task Forces

During 2016, the ACS continued to provide support to, and facilitate the meetings of, the Arctic Council’s Task Forces. Thus far in 2016, the ACS has supported the following meetings: Scientific Cooperation Task Force (SCTF, two meetings in 2016); Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation (TFAMC, two meetings in 2016); and Task Force on Telecommunications Infrastructure in the Arctic (TFTIA, two meetings in 2016). At least one ACS staff member has participated in each of these Task Force meetings held in 2016. At the request of the Chairs of the relevant Task Forces, the ACS also provided simultaneous translation between English and Russian at several Task Force meetings.

The support the ACS has provided includes: working with hosts to make logistical arrangements for meetings; distributing and archiving Task Force documents as appropriate and as directed by the Chairs; maintaining current distribution lists for Task Force materials; drafting meeting minutes and reports; managing core Task Force documents (including translation of those documents and comments into and from Russian); assisting in meetings; and preparing updates on the Task Forces’ work for the Arctic Council website.

Support to Expert Groups

During 2016, the ACS provided secretariat support to, and facilitated the meetings of, the Arctic Council Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane (EGBCM). In 2016, the ACS has serviced two EGBCM meetings. The support provided by the ACS to the EGBCM is of the same nature as the support given to the Task Forces.

5. Archiving (Establishing the institutional memory)

Historical Arctic Council archiving

The ACS has continued to work on collecting historical Arctic Council documents such as meeting documents, statements, participant lists, correspondence, and photographs from the first round of Arctic Council Chairmanships. The ACS has now received documents from most of the Arctic States. However, some work still remains to transfer copies of all of the files from some of the national archives. The U.S. Chairmanship and the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration have been assisting with the work.

Password-protected website documents

In an effort to further improve cybersecurity, the ACS has been researching options for a new and more secure platform for password-protected documents. Such a platform would be separate from the main Arctic Council website. After consultations with the Member States and their IT staff members, Microsoft SharePoint was chosen as a viable solution. The ACS technical officer and website officer will work on designing and launching a SharePoint site during fall of 2016.

Open Access Repository (OAR)

New documents have regularly been added to the OAR following SAO meetings and by the request of Working Groups and Task Forces.

6. Technology and Equipment

In general, the ACS is functioning well in terms of technology and equipment. New and large software programs (e.g., the full installation of eDOCS) demonstrated that we needed to upgrade and/or replace some of our computers due to lack of capacity. In addition, new computers and equipment have been purchased for recently-hired staff members. Some

new photo equipment has also been purchased in order to support the photo project that is underway.

7. Human Resources

Since the last ACS update in October 2015, Elle Merete Omma (the IPS executive secretary) and Alona Yefimenko (the IPS technical adviser) have joined our team in Tromsø. Elle Merete started her work in Tromsø on 12 January 2016, and Alona Yefimenko relocated to Tromsø from Copenhagen on 1 August 2016.

In addition, Finland has very generously decided to second Ms. Iina Peltonen to the ACS. Ms. Peltonen started her work in Tromsø on 1 August 2016, and she will be seconded as a Special adviser until 31 January 2018.

Appraisal conversations were conducted in May 2016. In general, they continue to show a good work environment and strong team spirit at the Arctic Council Secretariat. Some individual courses and training have been implemented and will continue during autumn.

8. Status of budget and financial contributions

The 2016 budget for the Arctic Council Secretariat was approved by Ministers of the Arctic States at the Iqaluit 2015 Ministerial meeting in April 2015. The budget for 2016 amounts to USD 1,655,600. In accordance with the financial rules (Art. 5.3), a separate call for the host country contribution to the administrative budget was sent to Norway in December 2015, followed by separate calls for contributions to the Arctic States in February 2016. The ACS has not yet received all contributions for 2016.

9. Representing the ACS

The director of the ACS has been invited frequently to represent the ACS in different meetings or events. Only on a few occasions have these invitations been accepted. The ACS also continues to receive a fair number of delegations at its offices in Tromsø. These delegations typically wish to hear basic information about the Arctic Council, its priorities, and its current activities. Visits and representations are listed in an annex to this report.

Annex 1: Visitors received and representations made between 1 January 2016 and 31 August 2016

The ACS Director represented the ACS at the following events:

- West Nordic Conference in Grindavik, Iceland (January)
- Delegation of Special Envoyés from the Norwegian Ministry of Education, at Tromsø University (May)
- European Defence Agency (Project Team EU Maritime Capabilities in the Arctic), at KSAT, Tromsø (June)
- AMAP 25 Years Anniversary seminar in Oslo, (July)

The following visitors were received at the ACS offices, January 2016-August 2016. In most cases, the visits included a general introduction of the work of the Arctic Council, its structure, and priorities under the U.S. Chairmanship.

- Ambassador of South Korea (January)
- Foreign Minister of Finland Mr. Timo Soini and delegation (January)
- Icelandic Minister for Industry and Commerce Ms. Ragnheiður Elín Árnadóttir and delegation (January)
- Director of University of Iceland's Institute of International Affairs and Centre for Small State Studies (January)
- Delegation from the Embassy of Japan in Oslo (January)
- Representative from the European External Action Service (January)
- Delegation from the Nordic Information Office in North-Norway (April)
- Executive Director of International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry (ICRH), (April)
- Representatives from ARENA, cluster of North Norwegian tourism companies (April)
- Ambassador Samuel D. Heins, U.S. Ambassador to Norway (May)
- Group of students from Tromsø University and the Korea Maritime Institute (May)
- Farewell visit of Norwegian SAO Else Berit Eikeland (May)
- Mr. Ser Miang Ng, Ambassador of Singapore to Norway (May)
- Delegation from the Norwegian Peace Council (May)
- Cabinet expert from the European Commission, Vice President's cabinet (May)
- Professor from the University of Canterbury, NZ (June)
- Mr. Torben Brylle, Ambassador of Denmark to Norway (June)
- Delegation from the Chicago Council (June)
- Delegation from the University of the Arctic (June)
- Secretary General of the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouses (IALA) (June)
- President of the International Hydrographic Bureau (June)
- EU Parliament Committee on Fisheries (July)

- Representative from the incoming Finnish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council (July)
- Secretary General for the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians in the Arctic Region (SCPAR) (August)
- Annual visit from the Norwegian-American Parliamentary Exchange Program (NAPEP) (August)
- Chairman of the Board of ForestRE, UK (August)
- Head of Secretariat of the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme (August)
- Director General of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), (August)
- New Norwegian Senior Arctic Official Anniken Krutnes and deputy Grete Ødegaard (August)