

Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

International Arctic Science Committee (IASC)

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Observer's website, if appropriate:

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Is your state or organization still interested in continuing as an Observer of the Arctic Council?

Yes No

Observer Report

Please describe in no more than 2 pages your state or organization's contributions to the work of the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Task Forces and/or Expert Groups since the time of your most recent report, or in the previous two years. Please highlight contributions to specific projects, such as through proposals, concept development, in-kind and financial support, and hosting of meetings. If applicable, please include mention of collaboration with Permanent Participants, such as project proposal endorsement and support.

IASC has been an accredited observer of the Arctic Council from its very beginning and is supporting the work of the Arctic Council, its Working Groups (WGs) and Permanent Participants (PPs) by providing scientific expertise from all its members, including the non-Arctic countries. IASC's contributions so far have resulted in a number of very successful joint activities, such as the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) and the Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic (SWIPA) report. Sustaining Arctic Observing Network (SAON) is an ongoing joint activity. SAON was initiated by IASC and the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) in 2007 and is now managed by a SAON Board, with the Arctic Council appointing the Chair and IASC appointing the Vice-Chair. Secretarial support is provided by AMAP and IASC. The biennial Arctic Observing Summit (AOS) is held in conjunction with the Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW) and through SAON both IASC and the Arctic Council are contributing to the program.

The most recent joint activity was the ASSW 2016 in Fairbanks, which combined IASC's scientific meetings, the third AOS and the Arctic Council Senior Arctic Officials (SAO) meeting. An International Arctic Assembly Day in the middle of the week provided an excellent opportunity for a dialogue between scientists and policymakers to translate scientific research into specific plans and actions responding to a rapidly changing Arctic. The ASSW was initiated by IASC in 1999 to provide opportunities for coordination, cooperation and collaboration between the various scientific organizations involved in Arctic research and to economize on travel and time. Since 2013 the Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples Secretariat (IPS) is involved in the planning of the ASSW and IASC is providing travel support in the amount of 15,000 EUR per year to enable the participation of PP representatives as session conveners and presenters.

IASC's Founding Articles call for IASC to host an International Conference on Arctic Research Planning (ICARP) every ten years in order to review the status of Arctic science, provide scientific and technical advice, and promote cooperation and links with other national and international organizations. The final report of the 3rd ICARP "Integrating Arctic Research – A Roadmap for the Future" was presented at the ASSW 2016. ICARP III was an open process, with the opportunity for the wider Arctic community to contribute to the overall objectives. More than 20 international Arctic and global scientific organizations, Arctic Council WGs (AMAP and Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)) and Arctic Council PPs (through IPS) participated in the process. IASC provided additional funding to engage the PPs in the process and in addition to IPS, the Aleut International Association (AIA), the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) and the Saami Council were represented at the final ICARP III Conference held in conjunction with the ASSW 2015 in Toyama (Japan) 2015.

Over the past 25 years, IASC has evolved into the leading international science organization of the North and its membership today includes national science organizations from 23 countries involved in Arctic research, including 15 non-Arctic countries (Austria, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland and the UK). IASC is in the position to provide scientific advice on all aspects of Arctic research and during the last years Arctic Council WGs were making use of IASC's broad expertise to ensure the scientific quality of their reports and assessments. IASC coordinated the peer-review process of the Arctic Resilience Report Interim Report (ARR), the Arctic Resilience Assessment (ARA), the second Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR II) and, still ongoing, the Adaptation Actions of the Changing Arctic (AACA) report.

IASC has participated in all SAO and Ministerial meetings, mostly through its Executive Secretary, who at the last meeting in Fairbanks was invited to present a statement on behalf of the non-governmental observer organizations.

IASC is closely cooperating with AMAP since many years. Recent examples include the "The Arctic Freshwater System in a Changing Climate" which was initiated by IASC and the Climate and Cryosphere (CliC) project of the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP) and co-organized and co-funded by IASC, CliC and AMAP, as well a session "From Science to Politics" which was convened by IASC and AMAP during the Policy Section at the Arctic Frontiers 2015 Conference.

The cooperation with CAFF is mainly through the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP) to which several IASC scientists are contributing.

IASC is also well connected to SDWG and was represented at the last meeting in Barrow through Malgorzata Smieszek (Fellow of IASC's Social and Human Sciences Working Group (SHWG)) who is also involved in the Arctic Resilience Framework.

Closer links to ACAP are currently being established with Otso Suominen and Arja Rautio (members of IASC's SHWG) attending the recent Circumpolar Local Environmental Observer (CLEO) workshop.

The Arctic Council initiative to develop a legally binding agreement to strengthen international scientific cooperation is of great interest to IASC and IASC representatives participated in all meetings of the Science Cooperation Task Force (SCTF). The Executive Secretary was invited to contribute to the work of the SCTF by providing an overview of the lessons learnt from the International Polar Year.

IASC also participated in the meetings of the Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation (TFAMC) through Sergey Priamikov, representing IASC's Marine Working Group (MWG). IASC's MWG, comprising the marine expertise from all 23 IASC member countries, would be in the position to provide scientific input essential for marine stewardship.

Recently, IASC was invited to contribute to the Task Force on Telecommunications Infrastructure in the Arctic (TFTIA) in terms of the Inter-regional and pan-Arctic needs for science and environment.

If applicable, please describe in no more than 1 page your state or organization's future plans for contributing to the work of the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Task Forces and/or Expert Groups. Please highlight intentions to contribute to specific projects and to collaborate with Permanent Participants.

IASC maintains very good relationships with those Arctic Council WGs addressing scientific questions, in particular AMAP, and CAFF and SDWG. Several member of the IASC family are also involved in activities of these Arctic Council WGs in their national capacity, as experts from either Arctic Council member countries or Observer countries. IASC will continue the cooperation with the Arctic Council WGs and contribute to activities such as AMAP's SWIPA follow-up, CAFF's CBMP and others. Due to the large network of experts, the broad scientific expertise and the scientific freedom as a non-governmental organization, IASC is in the position to provide independent scientific advice and to serve as reviewer or review coordinator of Arctic Council assessments or reports. IASC's contributions as a review coordinator of the ARA, AHDR II and AACA was very much appreciated by the respective Arctic Council WG and IASC is planning to continue these contributions in the future.

In 2017, the IASC Secretariat will move to Akureyri (Iceland) where it will be co-located with the PAME and CAFF Secretariats. This co-location will enable more cooperation in particular with CAFF and PAME.

SAON is an important joint activity of IASC and the Arctic Council. IASC will strengthen SAON and the Arctic Data Committee (ADC) that was jointly established by IASC and SAON, as emphasized in the conference statement of the 3rd AOS. IASC will also continue to host the AOS at the ASSW every second year, with the 4th AOS being held in conjunction with the POLAR 2018 conference, a joint conference of the IASC and the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) in Davos (Switzerland).

Having IASC's annual scientific summit back to back with an Arctic Council SAO at the ASSW 2016 in Fairbanks has been very useful to facilitate the dialogue between science and policy. The next opportunity for such a joint conference would be in 2020 under the Icelandic Chairmanship of the Arctic Council and IASC would be interested in exploring this opportunity.

Representing all countries engaged in Arctic research, IASC will continue to contribute to the work of the SCTF and other Task Forces. Arctic research is international and non-Arctic countries are making invaluable contributions both in terms of scientific expertise and research infrastructure.

Supporting the work of the Arctic Council PPs, in particular with respect to traditional and local knowledge, is of high priority for IASC. IASC will continue to provide travel support for indigenous participants to attend the ASSW 2017 in Prague (Czech Republic) and future ASSWs.

In that respect IASC is also cooperating with IPS, the International Arctic Social Sciences Association (IASSA), the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) and the University of the Arctic (UArctic) regarding the organization of three PP events in conjunction with the UArctic Congress 2016, IASC's ASSW 2017 and IASSA's 2017 congress.

If applicable, please describe in no more than 1 page your state or organization's contributions to other aspects of the Arctic Council and its goals not covered by the previous sections since the time of your most recent report, or in the previous two years.

During the next years IASC will particularly concentrate on supporting research that addresses ICARP III priorities:

- (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.

Capacity building among researchers, decision-makers and Arctic indigenous and non-indigenous residents, incorporating traditional and local knowledge and engaging northern and indigenous communities in setting priorities, co-designing and co-producing research as well as communicating Arctic science beyond the Arctic research community in order to reach key stakeholders and decision-makers are key objectives.

Recognizing that most of these priorities are also of great importance to the Arctic Council, IASC will continue to engage WGs and PPs in the implementation of ICARP III.