

IASC Presentation to the Senior Arctic Officials Meeting (Kautokeino, 19-20 November 2008).

2008

International Arctic Science Committee (IASC)

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IASC's New Organizational Structure

At the Arctic Science Summit Week in Syktyvkar (Russia), March 2008, IASC agreed on adopting a new organizational structure to reflect the progressively more integrative nature of today's polar science.

The new structure includes Scientific Standing Committees and Action Groups as the core working elements of the new IASC. Thus, the most important change is a much larger opportunity for the 18 IASC member countries to participate in IASC activities, in particular in overall science planning as the Scientific Standing Committees will be populated with top scientists from all member countries and other Arctic science organizations as ex-officio representatives.

In short, the proposed new IASC structure is based on three main pillars:

- I. Council, Executive Committee and Secretariat;
- II. Scientific Standing Committees;
- III. Action Groups.

The main IASC instruments for supporting science development are:

- ❖ Assessments/Science Planning Initiatives;
- ❖ Long-Term Programs;
- ❖ Workshops;
- ❖ Networks etc.

The IASC Executive Committee has established an Action Group to assist IASC with developing new Bylaws and Rules of Procedure. Interim Chairs for the Scientific Standing Committee have been appointed.

IASC Regional Board

When IASC was established in 1990, the IASC Regional Board, comprised of representatives from governmental scientific organizations in the eight Arctic countries, was formed to ensure that the activities of IASC are consistent with the interests of the Arctic Countries.

The Regional Board has been discussing the future role and its responsibilities within the new IASC structure. The Board has also examined its role in light of the changes that have occurred over the last 10 years such as the establishment of the Arctic Council, the increased linkages between IASC and other international Arctic organizations and IASC's ongoing restructuring.

In the final analysis, members agreed with the conclusion of the IASC Review and Strategy Group that the Regional Board has no useful role in the new IASC structure and decided to disband.

IASC Secretariat

During the last three years, the IASC Secretariat was hosted by the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat in Stockholm with the support of the Swedish Academy of Sciences and the Swedish Research Council.

Beginning of 2009, the secretariat will move to Potsdam (Germany). For a 5 year period, the new IASC Secretariat will be hosted by the Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research and co-financed by the German Science Foundation.

IASC's Relationship to Other Organizations

IASC is an International Scientific Associate of the International Council for Science (ICSU) and has formal agreements with several international Polar organizations.

- ➔ In 2006, IASC and the **Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR)** signed a Letter of Agreement. As an expression of this cooperation, SCAR and IASC co-sponsored the first IPY Conference, the SCAR/IASC Open Science Conference on "Polar Research – Arctic and Antarctic Perspectives in the IPY" (St. Petersburg, Russia, Jul 8-11, 2008). The conference was a huge success. It was the largest ever polar conference, attracting 1200 participants, the first bipolar conference, and the first SCAR/IASC conference. IASC sponsored more than 20 early career scientists to participate in the conference.
- ➔ IASC and the **Arctic Ocean Sciences Board (AOSB)** are in the process of merging. AOSB will become the Scientific Standing Committee on the Marine System.
- ➔ In 2008, IASC and the **International Arctic Social Sciences Association (IASSA)** signed a Letter of Agreement.
- ➔ Also in 2008, IASC and SCAR signed Memoranda of Understanding with the
 - **World Climate Research Program (WCRP)** on the co-sponsorship of the **Climate and Cryosphere (CliC)** program;
 - the **Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS)**;
 - the **International Association of Cryospheric Sciences (IACS)**.

Arctic Science Summit Week 2009

The Arctic Science Summit Week is held every year, but the size and nature of the meeting varies between years. Once every two years the Arctic Science Summit Week is a meeting of the governing bodies of the Arctic Science Summit Week affiliated partners. The IASC Secretariat ensures that the participating organizations have time for cross fertilization and collaboration. Every other year, the Arctic Science Summit Week is held in conjunction with an open international science symposium.

The Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW) 2009 will take place in Bergen, Norway, 22-28 March 2009. According to the new structure of the ASSW described above, the ASSW 2009 in Bergen will not only include annual meetings of the Arctic organizations and side meetings of other groups, but for the first time also an open international science symposium. The symposium will take place on 24-26 March and will consist of the following eight sessions:

- Sea Ice changes and the impacts on Biodiversity and Human Communities;
- Arctic Climate Variability – past to future;
- The Role of the Arctic in the Global Change process;
- Evolution of Arctic Ecosystems in a Warming World;
- Indigenous Cultures – Past to Future;
- Coastal environments as a link between land and sea in the Arctic;
- Risks to Human Health from Arctic change;
- History of Arctic Science.

IASC's Contribution to the IPY Legacy

A presentation on IASC's (and SCAR's) contribution to the IPY legacy was given at the last SAO Meeting in Svolvær. The present intervention re-emphasises IASC's commitment to contribute to ensuring the legacy of the IPY by

- ❖ encouraging and facilitating scientific cooperation (e.g. SCAR/IASC IPY Conference 2008, IPY Oslo Science Conference 2010);
- ❖ promoting coordinated and sustained observing systems (e.g. SAON);
- ❖ supporting and involving the next generation of scientists working in the Arctic (e.g. IASC/SCAR Memorandum of Understanding with APECS);
- ❖ advancing bipolar cooperation (e.g. SCAR-IASC cooperation);
- ❖ etc.