

# Instructions for Observers subject to review

## Introduction

This document provides the reporting template and accompanying instructions for Observers to be reviewed during the **Icelandic Chairmanship (2019-2021)**.

The deadline for submission is **1 June 2020**.

According to the "[Arctic Council Rules of Procedure](#)" (Annex 2), every **two years** Observers are requested to submit to the Chairmanship up-to-date information about relevant activities and their contributions to the work of the Arctic Council. Every four years, from the date of being granted Observer status, Observers will be reviewed at the Ministerial meeting. The following **20 Observers** will be reviewed at the next Ministerial meeting, and are requested to submit their review report by **1 June 2020**:<sup>1</sup>

- Germany;
- The Netherlands;
- Poland;
- Switzerland;
- United Kingdom;
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN);
- Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM);
- OSPAR Commission (OSPAR);
- Standing Committee of the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Regions (SCPAR);
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN-ECE);
- United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment);
- West Nordic Council (WNC);
- World Meteorological Organization (WMO);
- Advisory Committee on the Protection of the Seas (ACOPS);
- International Arctic Science Committee (IASC);
- International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES);
- International Union for Circumpolar Health (IUCH);
- Northern Forum (NF);
- Oceana; and,
- World Wildlife Fund for Nature – Global Arctic Program (WWF).

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<sup>1</sup> These include the Observers reviewed before the Fairbanks Ministerial meeting in 2017 as well as Observers admitted that year.

## Role of Observers

The role and responsibilities of Observers, as well as criteria for admission to the Arctic Council, can be found in the “Arctic Council Rules of Procedure” (Annex 2) and the “[Observer Manual for Subsidiary Bodies](#).”

The primary role of Observers is to observe the work of the Arctic Council. Observers contribute to the Arctic Council primarily through engagement at the level of Working Groups, Task Forces, and/or Expert Groups. Observers are invited to the meetings and other activities of the Arctic Council unless the Senior Arctic Officials decide otherwise. Observers may also propose projects through an Arctic State or a Permanent Participant.

## Report submission

Observer review reports should include the relevant information described below and in the template.

- (a) A description of the Observer’s contributions to the work of the Arctic Council since the time of the Observer’s most recent submission, or in the previous two years, with special focus on contributions to the subsidiary bodies through project participation and support, as well as collaboration with Permanent Participants;
- (b) If applicable, a description of the Observer’s future plans to contribute to the work of the Arctic Council, with special focus on contributions to the subsidiary bodies through project participation and support, as well as collaboration with Permanent Participants; and,
- (c) If applicable, a description of the Observer’s contributions to other aspects of the Arctic Council and its goals not covered in the previous sections since the time of the Observer’s most recent submission, or in the previous two years.

Observer review reports should be submitted electronically to the **Arctic Council Secretariat** via email: [acs@arctic-council.org](mailto:acs@arctic-council.org) not later than **1 June 2020**. Please bear in mind while preparing your report that all Observer reports will be published online in the *Observer* section of the [Arctic Council online Library](#).

If an Observer fails to submit a report during the review process, the Arctic Council will consider this to mean that the Observer **is no longer interested in maintaining its status** as an accredited Observer to the Arctic Council.

## Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

International Arctic Science Committee (IASC)

Date of submission:

1 June 2020

Observer's website, if appropriate:

www.iasc.info

### Information for appropriate contact person

Full name: Gerlis Fugmann (Update as of August 2020)

Email: gerlis.fugmann@iasc.info

Telephone: +354 515 5824

Organization or department: IASC

Job Title: Executive Secretary

Full mailing address: IASC Secretariat  
Borgir, Norðurslóð  
600 Akureyri  
Iceland

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

**Yes**  **No**

## Observer Review Report

Please describe in no more than two pages your state's 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. Please detail any 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 has participated in all SAO and Ministerial meetings, mostly through its Executive Secretary as well as national IASC Council members.

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 AMAP appointing the Chair and IASC appointing the Vice-Chair. Secretariat 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 AOS was held in March-April 2020, and its outcomes will be delivered to the Arctic Science Ministerial.

IASC has closely cooperated with AMAP for many years. Most recently, IASC has agreed to help AMAP conduct its review process in an even more independent manner, in particular by identifying and recommending scientists to review its assessment reports. This is in addition to also being a resource for nominating experts to the groups developing the reports. IASC also continues to send representatives to AMAP meetings and receives reports from AMAP at its meetings. IASC aims to help AMAP, and all Arctic Council activities, achieve authoritative scientific input and review.

Cooperating with CAFF has grown much stronger since the IASC Secretariat moved to Akureyri almost four years ago. IASC continues to send representatives to CAFF meetings and working group meetings. In addition to the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP), to which several IASC scientists are contributing, the IASC Executive Secretary served on the Steering Committee for the Arctic Biodiversity Congress (October 2018), where he also co-chaired a session (with the AMAP Executive Secretary) on "Impact of reduced ice cover in the Arctic marine environment" and served as a rapporteur for multiple other session. When the IASC Executive Committee meets in Akureyri, the CAFF Executive Secretary is also invited to contribute to their meeting and discuss how IASC can better cooperate with CAFF and feed into CAFF's work.

In 2018 and 2020, IASC and CAFF also co-sponsored a joint Fellowship Program (10,000 Euro/year). Two fellows were selected for each cohort, each identified a joint area of interest and expertise, participated in and contribute to CAFF's work, and will produce some culminating output. The inaugural Fellows focused on the Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI), CBMP's Terrestrial Working Group, and CBMP's Coastal Working Group. Fellows participate in the CAFF Board Meeting, working group meetings, and a large international conference such as Arctic Science Summit Week and/or the Arctic Biodiversity Congress as part of their fellowship.

IASC cooperation with PAME has also grown since the co-location of our Secretariats in Akureyri, and the more recent co-appointment of an IASC Vice-President as the PAME Chair. Like CAFF, when the IASC Executive Committee meets in Akureyri, the PAME Executive Secretary is invited to contribute to their meeting and discuss how IASC can better cooperate with PAME and feed into PAME's work. In addition, IASC nominated three experts to participate in PAME's desktop study on marine litter and plastic pollution; IASC sent representatives to multiple PAME meetings over the past two years; and IASC nominated four experts to the PAME reference group on Marine Protected Area Connectivity.

The Arctic Science Summit Week (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) has been involved in the planning of the ASSW and IASC provides travel support up to 15,000 EUR or more per year to enable the participation of PP representatives in ASSW, in particular as session conveners and presenters. The International Scientific Committee of ASSW2020 features two PP representatives – one as a member of the committee and one as a co-chair.

IASC is also well connected to SDWG and was represented at recent meetings through early career Fellows as well as senior experts. There is significant overlap in participation and interests between IASC's Social & Human Working Group and the SDWG, in particular under Iceland's leadership of the Gender in the Arctic Project; a complementary IASC SHWG-supported project is focusing on gender in the Arctic as well as gender in Arctic science. IASC also nominated experts to the SDWG reference group on Blue Bioeconomy.

Links with ACAP and EPPR have been maintained by IASC representation at recent ACAP meetings (in 2018) and EPPR meetings in 2019 (Norway and Iceland). IASC hopes to continue this representation at meetings in 2020, depending on travel restrictions.

IASC also participated in the meetings of multiple other groups. In particular, IASC Vice-President Henry Burgess has participated in the Arctic Shipping Best Practices Information Forum meetings.

Finally, IASC successfully convened an online meeting under the theme "Science for a Sustainable Arctic." While initially meant to be back-to-back with Arctic Council meetings in Akureyri, this online forum still enabled us to feature strong dialog between Arctic scientists and Arctic policy and diplomatic representatives from the Arctic Council family. Thanks to online platforms, this provided an excellent opportunity for a dialogue between scientists and policymakers to discuss how research informs policy and vice versa, responding to a rapidly changing Arctic. IASC hopes to be able to continue to support the Arctic Council's capacity for remote attendance and participation.

If applicable, please describe in no more than one page your state's 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.

Over its history, 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. IASC is working to further expand its membership, as well. 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 hopes to continue in this role in the future.

IASC maintains very good relationships with those Arctic Council WGs addressing scientific questions, in particular AMAP, and CAFF and SDWG (and to some extent EPPR and ACAP). Several members 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 upcoming activities and assessments. Future engagement from IASC is also expected to align with the forthcoming Strategic Plan of the Arctic Council.

Supporting the work of the Arctic Council PPs, in particular with respect to Indigenous knowledge, is of high priority for IASC. IASC convened an Action Group on Indigenous Involvement, which featured engagement of multiple PP representatives as well as a member of the IPS, and is now working to implement the group's recommendations. One step in this will be to engage directly with the PPs and the IPS. IASC will continue to provide travel support for Indigenous participants to attend the ASSW 2021 in Lisbon (Portugal), ASSW 2022 in Tromsø (Norway – where we hope to have particular interest and participation of members from the ACS, as well), ASSW2023 (Austria), and future ASSWs.

SAON is an important joint activity of IASC and the Arctic Council. IASC will strengthen SAON, along with its new Strategy, Implementation Plan, and the developing ROADS process to identify shared Arctic variables based upon societal benefits. Discussions are moving forward regarding expanded and sustained funding of SAON. IASC will also continue to host the AOS at the ASSW every second year, the 6<sup>th</sup> Arctic Observing Summit will be held in Tromsø, Norway in 2022.

Based in Iceland, IASC is also excited to partner on and help support Arctic Council activities and initiatives during the rest of the Icelandic chairmanship, many of which have scientific interest. In addition, the International Science Initiative in the Russian Arctic (ISIRA) is a Russian and IASC cooperative initiative to assist Arctic science and sustainable development in the Russian Arctic; this group's activity may be of particular interest during the Russian chairmanship.

If applicable, please describe in no more than one page your state's 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.

IASC's Strategic Plan for 2018-2023 is built on the scientific priorities of the ICARP-III (i.e., 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Arctic Research Planning - The Role of the Arctic in the Global System; Observing and Predicting Future Climate Dynamics and Ecosystem Responses; and Understanding the Vulnerability and Resilience of Arctic Environments and Societies and Supporting Sustainable Development; all underpinned by capacity building in Arctic research), IASC will:

- Facilitate Arctic Research Cooperation by
  - ...stimulating and promoting cutting-edge interdisciplinary research
  - ...supporting sustained and coordinated observations
  - ...facilitating data and information management and sharing
- Promoting Arctic Science Engagement by
  - ...building Arctic research capacity
  - ...supporting participation by Indigenous and local residents
  - ...nurturing and expanding IASC partnerships
- Ensure Knowledge Exchange by
  - ...encouraging high-quality scientific output
  - ...transferring knowledge to policy and decision makers
  - ...increasing Arctic science education, outreach, and communication

Recognizing that most of these scientific and organizational priorities are also of great importance to the Arctic Council, IASC will continue to engage WGs and PPs in the implementation of its Strategic Plan.

Adjacent to the work of the Arctic Council, and representing countries engaged in Arctic research, IASC will support the work of implementing the Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation. More information at <https://iasc.info/ASA>. Likewise, IASC supports the initiation and development of a group of international Arctic science funders. Arctic research is international and non-Arctic countries are making invaluable contributions both in terms of scientific expertise and research infrastructure.

Finally, IASC would like to highlight that it will be releasing a 2020 State of Arctic Science Report in June 2020. IASC aims for this report to be of interest to all those stakeholders in Arctic research, in particular including the Arctic Council family. Follow-on reports may be developed in future years, depending on the feedback that IASC receives.