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# THE IASC HANDBOOK OF PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES

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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

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At the 2018 meeting in Davos, the IASC Council unanimously agreed that an ‘Action Group would be established to formalize IASC guiding and procedural documents and provide recommendations to align them, fill gaps, and recommend updates to one unified IASC Handbook,’ thus recognizing the need to provide a single and easily readable source of the procedures and processes by which IASC, as a whole, operates.

The **IASC Handbook of Procedures and Guidelines (the ‘Handbook’)** is the result of the work by the Action Group and has been updated periodically since 2018 by the IASC Executive Committee and Council. It draws from and expounds upon the existing documents and processes, with the aim of having a comprehensive text which reflects current practice as endorsed and delivered by the IASC Executive Committee and the Council.

The intention is that this Handbook acts as the primary source of information about how IASC governs itself. It should be fully accessible and available to everyone with an interest in IASC, as well as being sufficiently comprehensive to act as the guide for internal processes and decisions. It is expected that the Handbook will evolve as IASC itself changes. Straightforward processes are included to ensure that the Executive Committee and Council are able to make and oversee these changes to the Handbook appropriately.

The Handbook does not replace or alter the **Founding Articles of IASC** in any way. These Articles remain the fundamental basis for the existence and operation of IASC and are included in full in [Annex A](#).

## 2. WHAT IS IASC

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The **International Arctic Science Committee (IASC)** is a non-governmental, international scientific organization. The Founding Articles (Annex A) commit IASC to pursue a mission of encouraging and facilitating cooperation in all aspects of Arctic research, in all countries engaged in Arctic research and in all areas of the Arctic region.

Rather than defining human and environmental boundaries, IASC tries to bridge those boundaries. IASC is also committed to recognizing that all knowledge and scientific systems (including Indigenous, traditional and local knowledges) are equally valued and complementary and should inform the work of IASC.

The Founding Articles of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) were signed by representatives of national scientific organizations of the eight Arctic countries in August 1990. The Founding Articles and its derivatives provide an important source of continuity to the IASC’s activities.

## 2.1. WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT IASC?

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IASC is unique, and thus different from other science organizations concerned with Arctic research, as it:

- embraces all fields of Arctic science.
- covers all the Arctic and promotes a circum-Arctic approach.
- is concerned to promote interdisciplinary science.
- provides an opportunity for programs in need of circum-Arctic coordination and cooperation.
- is a non-governmental scientific organization that links scientific academies, institutes and industrial scientists in each of its member countries.

## 2.2. IASC MISSION AND STRATEGY

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IASC promotes and supports interdisciplinary research to foster greater scientific understanding of the Arctic region and its role in the Earth system. The IASC Founding Articles call upon IASC to provide scientific and technical advice and promote cooperation and links with other national and international organizations and to periodically review the status of Arctic science. IASC's third review was a two-year long bottom-up process that resulted in the [ICARP III report, "Integrating Arctic Research – a Roadmap for the Future,"](#) published in 2015.

The ICARP III 'Roadmap' highlighted three key science priorities:

- The Role of the Arctic in the Global System
- Observing and Predicting Future Climate Dynamics and Ecosystem Responses
- Understanding the Vulnerability and Resilience of Arctic Environments and Societies and Supporting Sustainable Development

This ICARP III "Roadmap" was the basis for the first IASC Strategic Plan for the period 2018 – 2023 that defined the directions in which IASC worked during this period.

The [4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Arctic Research Planning \(ICARP IV\) process](#) is currently underway and its outcomes, to be presented in March 2026, will profoundly influence IASC strategic planning in the future. The IASC Council, therefore, decided to wait for the results of the ICARP IV process to develop a new strategy for IASC for the years 2027 onwards.

To bridge the gap between its existing and the future Strategic Plan, the IASC Council decided to:

- Extend the existing IASC Strategic Plan to 2026 with only a minor internal revision and update of its content, based on the work of an Action Group composed of representatives of the IASC Working Groups and Council; and

- Continue to annual update the Implementation Plan for the Strategic Plan 2018 – 2023, developed at the ASSW 2019, within the same timeframe based on guidance from the IASC Council.

The **IASC Strategic Plan 2023-2026** is based on three pillars and will be implemented through:

- *Pillar 1: Facilitating Arctic Research Cooperation*
  - Stimulating and promoting cutting-edge interdisciplinary research
  - Supporting sustained and coordinated observations
  - Facilitating data and information management and sharing
  - Supporting the reduction of carbon footprint in all IASC activities and research co-operations
- *Pillar 2: Promoting Engagement*
  - Building Arctic research capacity
  - Supporting participation by Indigenous Peoples and local residents in science activities
  - Nurturing and expanding IASC partnerships
- *Pillar 3: Ensuring Knowledge Exchange*
  - Encouraging high-quality scientific output
  - Transferring knowledge to policy and decision makers
  - Increasing Arctic science education, outreach and communication

For the full IASC Strategic Plan for 2023-2026, see [Annex B](#).

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### 2.3. IASC ETHICS

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IASC is committed to ensuring that the opportunities provided through its internal and external processes, activities and events are delivered in ways that support participation regardless of nationality, ethnicity, religion, race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic status, disability, physical appearance, age or career status.

The IASC leadership (including the Executive Committee, Council members, Working Groups, Action Groups and Secretariat) will take all reasonable steps to ensure that this approach is reflected in their own activities and those, such as the Arctic Science Summit Week and Arctic Observing Summit, for which they have whole or partial responsibility. Those participating in events connected to IASC are encouraged and expected to uphold a similar approach.

The IASC leadership are expected to avoid situations in connection with their official role which could, in the view of a reasonable person, be seen to lead to a conflict of interest or may raise questions about their impartiality.

IASC is committed to ensuring a safe, productive and welcoming environment for all. Instances of conflict of interest, discrimination or harassment will be addressed by appropriate procedures developed by the Executive Committee, in consultation with the Council, as needed.

### 3. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

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The scientific communities in IASC member countries are connected with IASC through a single national scientific organization. “**National scientific organization**” refers to a single national body that reflects the views of the Arctic scientific community within a country and which in that capacity designates a representative to IASC and is listed as the “**adhering body**” to IASC.

The **Council** sets priorities and guides the work of the organization. An **Executive Committee**, consisting of an elected President, four elected Vice-Presidents and a permanent Executive Secretary operate as a Board of Directors and manages IASC activities between Council meetings. The **Secretariat** is currently hosted by Rannís (The Icelandic Centre for Research) and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organization. The Secretariat was previously hosted by Germany, Norway and Sweden.

IASC is engaged in all fields of Arctic research and its main scientific working bodies are five **Working Groups**: Atmosphere, Cryosphere, Marine, Social & Human and Terrestrial. Each Working Group is composed of up to two scientists from each IASC member country, appointed by the national adhering bodies. Though the Working Groups are disciplinary, they also address cross-cutting science questions by initiating activities which involve at least two WGs.

**Standing Committees** are long-term bodies created by Council for long-term IASC initiatives working on defined long-term strategic issues that are of relevance and importance for all IASC activities and the organisation as a whole.

**Action Groups** are short-term expert groups that provide strategic advice to the IASC Council concerning both long-term activities and urgent needs.

**ISIRA** - the International Science Initiative in the Russian Arctic - is an IASC advisory body. It is a Russian and international cooperative initiative to assist Arctic science and sustainable development in the Russian Arctic.

This organizational structure provides a sound framework enabling Arctic research to be useful in an international political context as well as in the advancement of circum-Arctic science. An international science program planned or recommended by IASC should be of high priority to Arctic or global science.

### 3.1. THE IASC COUNCIL

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#### REPRESENTATION ON COUNCIL:

The Council member in each country shall appoint a person to be that country's representative to the Council. Alternates are acceptable provided notifications are received in advance.

All members shall appoint an identified body or national committee to provide active ongoing contact between the representative to the Council and the Arctic scientific community in each respective country. The national committee should include, but not be limited to, senior scientists (or science administrators) engaged in Arctic research.

#### ADMISSION OR WITHDRAWAL OF PARTICIPANTS IN COUNCIL:

Countries engaged in significant Arctic research may apply for membership on IASC Council by submitting an application to the Secretariat at least six months prior to an announced meeting of Council. The application shall include:

- a statement of interest in applying for membership on the IASC Council and of agreement with the provisions of the Founding Articles;
- evidence of significant Arctic research, defined as being in at least two major fields of enquiry, with published results in the international refereed science literature over a period of at least five years;
- a statement naming the appropriate national scientific body to reflect the interests of the Arctic and scientific community in the country, and to designate the representative on Council.

Applications for membership on IASC Council shall be forwarded by the Secretariat to Council members for consideration.

The decision of Council on any application shall be final. Subsequent applications shall be considered as new applications.

Any country admitted by this procedure immediately shall become a member of IASC.

Non-arctic members of IASC may demonstrate periodically that they have a continuing Arctic research commitment. Failing such demonstration, their membership may lapse.

Any nation member may withdraw from IASC by giving formal written notice.

#### THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL:

The Council of IASC shall meet at least once every two years. At each regular meeting of the Council, the time and place of the next meeting should be agreed. Six months in advance of the next meeting, the Secretariat should notify Council members and others concerned in writing of the time, place, and principal agenda items for the Council meeting. Special Council meetings can be called by the President based on a request from any Council member.

- Since it was first initiated by IASC in 1999, the Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW) has evolved into the most important annual gathering of the Arctic research organizations. The Council now

meets annually at the ASSW to set priorities and guide the work of the organization. The Arctic Science Summit Week is described below.

Agenda items to be considered by the Council at its regular meetings shall be proposed by a Council representative or the Chairperson of the Regional Board to the Secretariat at least two months before the meeting. At each regular meeting the Council should review the progress of all its activities.

The Council may appoint an Executive Committee selected from among its members. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for IASC matters between Council meetings. The selection procedure for the Executive Committee is described below.

Council will define or approve guidelines for each Working Group and each Action Group, covering as appropriate the subject, scope, objectives, size, reporting responsibilities, scheduling and financial or other arrangements. The guidelines may be revised at a meeting of Council.

Summary minutes, records of decisions, and items for action shall be prepared from each meeting. Drafts are to be circulated to Council members for comments and endorsement before open distribution.

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### 3.2. THE IASC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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An Executive Committee, elected by the Council, directs the affairs of IASC and attends to matters requiring consideration by IASC.

The Executive Committee is made up of the President, four Vice Presidents as elected by the Council, and the Executive Secretary. They serve for up to two four-year terms.

The Executive Committee is chaired by the President of the Council.

The Executive Committee will report all actions taken to the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.

The Executive Committee meets as often as necessary between Council meetings.

An annual budget shall be worked out by the Executive Committee and endorsed by the Council.

#### ELECTION PROCEDURES - IASC PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENTS

1. In those years when elections are being held, the Executive Committee shall appoint a nomination committee three months prior to the Council Meeting.

1.1. The nomination committee shall invite nominations from Council members, ascertain the nominees' agreement to stand for election and request the nominees' CVs two months before the election.

1.2. Only persons nominated before the Council meeting at which the election will be held are eligible to be placed on the ballot.

1.3. The nomination committee shall inform the Council one month before voting of the names to be placed on the ballot and provide the candidates' CVs.

2. The appointed officers serve for a term of approximately four years, with some limited flexibility due to varying meeting dates.

2.1. A staggered system of appointment to the Executive Committee is adopted to provide continuity, with two members of the Executive Committee to be replaced every second year.

3. Election of President and Vice Presidents shall be by secret ballot of the voting members present and the ballot shall be counted by a panel of three Council members appointed by the President.

3.1. Each IASC member country shall be entitled to one vote for each vacant post.

3.2. The current President does not have a vote in the ballot. The President's vote shall be cast by an alternative delegate from the President's nation.

4. In those years when the election of a President is being held, that election will be held prior to the elections for the vacant Vice President offices.

4.1. In the event of a tie between two or more candidates for President, another ballot shall be prepared with the names of the tied candidates only and another vote shall be held. If a tie prevails, without announcing that there is a tie, the current President shall exercise a casting vote and announces the election of the new President.

4.2. If there is a single candidate only for the office of President, that candidate shall be declared elected by acclamation.

4.3. Each unsuccessful candidate in the election for President shall be added to the list of candidates for the election of Vice Presidents, unless a candidate chooses to withdraw from that election.

5. If a serving Vice President is elected as the new President, an election shall be held to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term of the Vice President.

6. One election shall be held for all of the vacant Vice President positions. A single ballot shall be prepared listing all candidates for the vacant Vice President offices. Each member country may cast one vote for each vacancy. The candidates with the most votes will be elected.

6.1. In the event of a tie between two or more candidates for Vice-President, another ballot shall be prepared with the names of the tied candidates only and another vote shall be held. If a tie prevails, without announcing that there is a tie, the current President shall exercise a casting vote and announces the election of the new Vice-President(s).

7. Newly elected officers will assume office at the close of the Council meeting at which they are elected.

### 3.3. THE IASC REGIONAL BOARD

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*(Although a Regional Board is not currently being operated as a part of the IASC organizational structure, its potential and purpose is stated in the Founding Articles and the 1992 Rules and Procedures.)*

The Regional Board will consider general regional problems and other questions which affect the common interests of the Arctic countries. Its membership includes one representative from each of the

eight Arctic countries. The purpose of the Regional Board is to ensure that the activities of IASC are consistent with those interests.

The appropriate body in each Arctic Country shall nominate a representative to the Regional Board and may designate an alternate.

The Regional Board shall designate a Chairperson from among its members, for two years in the first instance.

### 3.4. THE IASC SECRETARIAT

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The Secretariat serves the organizational needs of IASC. It is directed by an Executive Secretary responsible to the Council.

1. The host country provides basic funding for the Secretariat according to the IASC Founding Articles, Chapter G. The Secretariat provides a short annual report on its activities at the end of each year to the funding agency or ministry together with a budget proposal.
2. The host country will be responsible for administrative matters related to employment of an Executive Secretary, according to qualifications jointly agreed upon by the host country and the Council.
3. If workload increases, other Secretariat positions may be filled by the host country, subject to approval by the Executive Committee. Such staff shall be responsible to the Executive Secretary.

Additional staff may be provided by member countries, subject to approval by the host country and the Executive Committee. Such staff are administratively responsible to their sponsoring organization or country but work under the direction of the Executive Secretary.

4. The Executive Secretary is accountable in matters of substance and performance to the Executive Committee and in matters of administration to the employing institution of the host country.
5. The Secretariat will be accountable to the Executive Committee, who will provide guidance as well as give instructions for its activities. The President will be in regular contact with the Executive Secretary and be responsible for supervising the Secretariat's activities.

The Executive Committee shall review at each regular meeting the activities of the Secretariat.

If the Secretariat and the Executive Secretary severely fail to fulfil the work plan or not carry out instructions given, the employing department of the host country should immediately be informed and is expected to take appropriate action.

6. For additional staff members, i.e. those not funded by the host country, there will be separate agreements identifying their duties and responsibilities. Their activities shall be clearly identified in the annual work plan of the Secretariat.

A report on their performance will be given on an annual basis to their sponsoring organization.

## PROCEDURES FOR RECRUITING AND ENGAGING AN EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

1. The definition of the duties and qualifications needed for an Executive Secretary is the responsibility of IASC Council or the Executive Committee.
2. The position shall be announced in all IASC member countries.
3. The host country should endorse the decision made by IASC and engage the highest ranked candidate for a mutually agreed period of years.
4. IASC Council will give the host country a performance evaluation at regular intervals (usually every second year). If the Executive Secretary fails to meet some minimum standards, the engagement should be terminated.

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### 3.5. WORKING GROUPS

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The scientific core elements of IASC are its Working Groups. The members are experts in their field, with an international reputation, and from different scientific disciplines and knowledge backgrounds so that the full range of Arctic research is represented in the WGs.

The standing IASC Working Groups and their scopes are:

- **Atmosphere:** The scientific scope of the Atmosphere Working Group (AWG) includes scientific research towards understanding and prediction of Arctic change and considering the fate of perennial sea ice and the global atmospheric consequences of its disappearance. This includes past climate states, investigation of Arctic processes across data sets and approaches, and climate model projections. The scope includes local and regional impacts of Arctic change. The geographic scope of the AWG shall be the Arctic but will also include the Arctic's responses to global change processes (arctic amplification) and impacts of Arctic changes on the northern hemisphere atmospheric circulation. The AWG addresses topics around interactions between the atmosphere, ocean, and cryosphere, the role of the atmosphere in Arctic socio-economic development, rapid Arctic climate change, and extreme weather and Arctic predictability. Specific topics of interest include: Cloud, Water Vapor, Aerosols, Fluxes; Arctic Air Pollution; Coupled Arctic Climate System; Arctic Weather Extremes; Linkages: Role of the Arctic in the Global Climate System. The topic have been put under the three pillars of: 1) Atmosphere in the coupled Arctic system; 2) Arctic Climate, Weather, and Predictability; 3) Arctic Pollution, socio-economic and environmental change.
- **Cryosphere:** The Cryosphere Working Group (CWG) supports and promotes all scientific or engineering research related to the Arctic and subarctic cryosphere, including glaciers, sea ice, snow, permafrost, seasonally frozen ground, and lake and river ice. It encompasses cryospheric interactions with the atmosphere, ocean, biosphere, and terrestrial systems in the past, present and future, and the cryosphere's role in climate and human society. The scientific foci of the CWG include: a) Improve knowledge of the past, current, and future state of the Arctic cryosphere across wide-ranging spatial and temporal scales using innovative methods including in-situ observations, remotely sensed measurements, models, citizen science, and participatory research; b) Advance understanding of melt and thaw processes, ice and snow dynamics, and

complex cryospheric interactions with atmosphere, terrestrial, ocean, and biological systems; c) Quantify and project cryospheric change and the frequency and intensity of extreme cryospheric events such as: heavy snowfalls, icing, avalanches and rockfalls, glacial lake outburst floods, glacier surges, abrupt permafrost thaw, permafrost coastal erosion, events resulting from sea ice dynamics, intrusion of warm air masses from outside the Arctic, and seasonal climate anomalies; d) Improve understanding of interactions between the cryosphere and human society, especially impacts of cryospheric change on humans, anthropogenic impacts on the cryosphere, and the contribution of local and indigenous communities to cryospheric knowledge.

- **Marine:** The IASC Marine Working Group (MWG) facilitates international coordination of research in the Arctic marine environment and supports cross-cutting objectives. Annual face-to-face meetings and online communication are used throughout the year, including interaction and collaboration with terrestrial, cryospheric, atmospheric, and social scientists as appropriate. An important goal is to support early career scientists and involve them in international research coordinated by IASC member countries, including an expanded role for IASC Fellows in MWG tasks. Starting in 2023, a network of IASC Alumni Fellows will support IASC and Working Group activities and their current Fellows, and maintain an active network of early to mid-career researchers and collaborators (IASC Fox). The scientific scope of the MWG includes but it is not limited to any marine natural science or engineering research related to the Arctic Ocean and Subarctic Seas. A strategic planning process has been undertaken to guide research and monitoring priorities aligned with international science planning goals such as those identified by the ICARP process and the UN DOS Arctic Action Plan. The identified research priorities are practical areas for international cooperation consistent with the pillars of IASC and the science programmes of its 24 member countries. Five themes have been identified addressing major unknowns that remain to be resolved in order to contribute to an integrated and predictive understanding of the Arctic System and its interactions with the overall Earth System. These themes, in no specific order of importance are: 1) Marine Life; 2) Sea Ice and Stratification; 3) Disturbances; 4) Biogeochemical Cycles; and 5) Connectivity and Borealization.
- **Social & Human:** The scientific scope of the Social and Human Sciences Working Group (SHWG) shall include all aspects of social sciences and humanities research in the Arctic, as well as their connections with other IASC Working Groups. The actual work of the Social & Human Sciences WG is determined by a dynamic list of scientific focus areas. The geographic scope of the Social and Human Sciences Working Group shall be the Arctic as defined in the map accompanying the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR). The geographic scope can be extended south where it is appropriate for an understanding of Arctic social and human processes. Disciplinary foci for the Social & Human Working Group are: 1) Demographics: COVID impacts in Arctic communities, Monitoring emerging infectious diseases, Arctic Migration; 2) Climate Change: Food sovereignty and Security, Social and environmental determinants of Health, Changing landscapes and impacts on community wellness, Community Adaptation; 3) Arctic Cooperation: Geopolitics and drivers of Arctic Cooperation, Decision making and inclusion in the Arctic political situation, Comparative health and social policies – sharing best practices and evidence informed policy. 4) Thriving communities: Cultural wellbeing, Mental wellness, Indigenous Languages, Land based observations and healing; 5) Land use for Sustainable Livelihoods: Resource development in a changing environment, Land use by Indigenous peoples. Cross-cutting focus - Interdisciplinary work across WG and within SHWG include: 1) Methods: Indigenous methods and knowledges, Methods that support the co-production of knowledge, Align with Interdisciplinary lenses and approaches; 2) Responsible research practice Ethics for Indigenous and community-based

research, Engagement and collaboration with Arctic communities, Equity and Social Justice; 3) Innovation in knowledge sharing and dissemination: Partnerships and impact with decision makers (ie EU), Use social media to share WG information and project highlights, Virtual collaboration among interest groups, Align with International Declarations ie UNFCCC, IPCC Assessments, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP); 4) Interdisciplinary lenses and approaches: One Health, Planetary Health, Indigenous frameworks and knowledges; 5) Capacity Building: Supporting early career scientists in WG activities & research, Supporting Indigenous community knowledge holders.

- **Terrestrial:** The scientific scope of the IASC Terrestrial Working Group (TWG) shall include any scientific research on Arctic terrestrial and freshwater environments, landscapes and biota, and their responses to, and interactions with, other components of the Earth system. The remit encompasses the dynamics of the Arctic system; past, present and future. Geographically, the main area of interest of the IASC Terrestrial Working Group encompasses lands and fresh water within the area north of the latitudinal treeline with Arctic climate and Arctic vegetation. Several adjacent areas are included where highly relevant for certain disciplines and projects (a) boreal oceanic tundra (e.g. the Aleutian Islands, North Atlantic islands), (b) alpine tundra that is continuous with the Arctic tundra (e.g. the central highlands of Iceland, the Scandes Mountains, the Polar Urals), (c) the forest tundra, and (d) drainage basins to the south that connect with freshwater and marine areas of the Arctic. Scientific Foci include: 1) Improving knowledge at multiple temporal and spatial scales of the current state of Arctic terrestrial geosystems and ecosystems, with special attention to impacts of permafrost degradation and Critical Zone processes; 2) Determining the net effect of the terrestrial and freshwater environmental and biosphere's processes that amplify or moderate climate warming; 3) Developing unifying concepts, fundamental theories, and computer models of the interactions among species, interactions between species and their environment, and the biology of life in extreme environments; 4) Estimating past changes in arctic geo- and biodiversity, measuring current change and predicting future changes; 5) Improving our knowledge in past ecosystems dynamics (before current Global Change). Determine baseline conditions to frame "natural variability and rate of change" versus "current variability and rate of change"

See [Annex C](#) for the **Working Group Terms of Reference**.

### 3.6. ACTION GROUPS

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1. Action Groups are short-term bodies created by Council to provide strategic advice to IASC on narrowly defined issues or actions. They will assist IASC in the implementation of IASC's mission.
2. Action Groups, in special circumstances where the need for action is urgent, may be created by the Executive Committee.
3. Action Groups may be established by a consensus vote of the Council. When created, they shall have fixed dissolution date not to exceed two years.
4. The responsibilities of Action Groups are to address and provide recommendations to Council on issues affecting the Arctic science community.

5. Members shall be nominated by Council and appointed by the Executive Committee for no more than two years.
6. Functioning
  - Each Action Group shall have a Chair for the term of the Action Group.
  - Action Groups conduct their work by correspondence as well as at meetings if necessary.
7. Meetings
  - Action Groups shall hold meetings as determined by the Chair.
8. Reporting
  - Action Groups will report at Executive Committee and Council Meetings and will provide a final report to the Council.
  - Executive Summaries of the reports of Action Groups will be posted on the IASC website and included in the IASC Bulletin.
9. Budget
  - Each Action Group shall be given a fixed budget for travel and meeting expenses. Request to exceed the budget shall be made in writing by the Chair to the Executive Committee.
10. Secretarial Support
  - Action Groups shall receive secretarial support from the IASC Secretariat.

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### 3.7. STANDING COMMITTEES

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1. Standing Committees are long-term bodies created by Council for long-term IASC initiatives working on defined long-term strategic issues that are of relevance and importance for all IASC activities and the organisation as a whole. They will assist IASC in the implementation of IASC's mission.
2. Standing Committees may only be established and dissolved by a consensus vote of the Council.
3. The responsibilities of Standing Committee are to provide advice and guidance for IASC defined long-term strategic issues that are of relevance and importance for all IASC activities and the organisation as a whole. The Standing Committee may also work on own projects and activities within its mandate.
4. Members shall be appointed by the IASC National Adhering Bodies for a term of 4 years with the possibility of one additional 4-year term.
5. Functioning

- a. Each Standing Committee shall have a Chair and two Vice-Chairs forming the Steering Group of the committee. The Chair and Vice Chairs shall be elected for a term of two years, and may be re-elected for one additional term.
  - b. Standing Committees conduct their work by correspondence as well as at meetings if necessary.
6. Meetings
    - a. Standing Committees shall hold meetings as determined by the Steering Group.
  7. Reporting
    - a. Standing Committees will report at Executive Committee and Council Meetings.
  8. Budget
    - a. The Standing Committee shall have an annual budget available at an amount set by the Council. Expenditures within the approved budget shall not require Council approval.
  9. Secretarial Support
    - a. Standing Committee shall receive secretarial support from the IASC Secretariat.

See **Annex D** for the **IASC Standing Committee on Indigenous Involvement Terms of Reference**

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## 4. IASC ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES

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This section details some of the ongoing activities and initiatives of IASC which work to achieve IASC's mission and strategic aims in complement to the structure described above.

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### 4.1. ARCTIC SCIENCE SUMMIT WEEK (ASSW) AND ARCTIC OBSERVING SUMMIT (AOS)

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The IASC Founding Articles laid out a vision for an Arctic science conference convened by IASC.

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. Over the years the summit evolved into the most important annual gathering of the Arctic research organizations. The summit is organized by an International Coordination Group and any organization engaged in supporting and facilitating Arctic research may participate.

The **ASSW International Partners Group** is chaired by IASC and currently includes:

- Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS)
- European Polar Board (EPB)
- Forum of Arctic Research Operators (FARO)
- Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat (IPS)
- International Arctic Social Sciences Association
- Ny-Ålesund Science Managers Committee (NySMAC)
- Pacific Arctic Group (PAG)
- University of the Arctic (UArctic)

Applications to host ASSW are solicited and approved by the IASC Council three years before the event. The IASC Secretariat maintains, as a living document, an [ASSW Playbook](#) explaining the organization of ASSW, the planning structure of the conference, and to facilitate the work of the ASSW Local Organizers.

In odd number years, the ASSW includes a 3-day Science Symposium as well as meetings of the participating organizations. These symposia create a platform for exchanging knowledge, cross fertilization and collaboration and attract scientists, students, policy makers and other professionals from all over the world. In even number years the ASSW includes meetings of the participating organizations and the Arctic Observing Summit (AOS), a high-level, biennial summit that aims to provide community-driven, science-based guidance for the design, implementation, coordination and long-term operation of Arctic observing systems.

The **Arctic Observing Summit (AOS)** is jointly run by IASC, the International Study of Arctic Change (ISAC), and the Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON) as a SAON outreach activity. See **Annex E** for AOS Procedures and Processes.

## 4.2. ICARP – INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ARCTIC RESEARCH PLANNING

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The IASC Founding Articles commit IASC to convene “the broad international scientific community involved in Arctic research” in a process periodically to “identify key scientific questions and issues.” As such, the [International Conference on Arctic Research Planning \(ICARP\)](#) provides a framework to:

- Identify Arctic science priorities for the next decade;
- Coordinate various Arctic research agendas;
- Inform policy makers, people who live in or near the Arctic and the global community; and
- Build constructive relationships between producers and users of knowledge.

ICARP does not undertake the development of new science plans but rather builds on the many comprehensive science plans that exist already and complements those with processes to identify gaps that may need attention. ICARP is a process for:

- Integrating priorities for forward-looking, collaborative, interdisciplinary Arctic research and observing and
- Establishing an inventory of recent and current synthesis documents and major developments in Arctic research.

Engaging all partners, including funders, in shaping the future of Arctic research needs, ICARP:

- Produces a consensus statement identifying the most important Arctic research needs for the next decade and
- Provides a roadmap for research priorities and partnerships.

ICARP III (2015) was governed by a Steering Committee established by participating organizations. It was structured along scientific themes and includes a series of events, culminating in a final conference at the Arctic Science Summit Week.

### 4.3. RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

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IASC maintains both formal and informal partnership with other organizations in order to advance IASC's mission and strategic goals. IASC seeks appropriate alignment and mutual benefit in its organizational relationships.

The IASC Founding Articles call upon IASC to provide scientific and technical advice and **promote cooperation and links with other national and international organizations**. IASC will take into account programmes and activities on Arctic research advanced by other scientific organizations and will cooperate with them as appropriate. Existing and future memoranda or understandings or letters of agreement with other **national and international organisations** will produce tangible cooperative outcomes such as increased information exchange, joint meetings, and initiatives.

- IASC may enter into formal agreements with other international organizations.
- Organizations wishing to affiliate with IASC through a formal agreement shall submit in writing to the IASC Secretariat a draft agreement outlining the benefits of a formalized relationship.
- Organizations with a formal agreement with IASC shall be considered affiliated organizations and shall be invited to participate in IASC council meetings but may not vote.
- Requests are considered by the Executive Secretary, discussed and approved by the Executive Committee, signed by the President, and publicly announced.
- The IASC Executive Committee and Executive Secretary should regularly report back to the Council on the status of IASC's partnerships.

While IASC may not sign formal partnership agreements with or be a direct project partner in competitive Arctic-(science)-focused projects and programs, the IASC Working Groups can encourage and support science-led international programs by offering opportunities for planning and coordination, and by facilitating communication and access to facilities via their IASC Cross-Cutting and Working Group

activities and funding. Projects funded by the IASC Cross-Cutting and Working Group funding are considered IASC projects.

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#### 4.4. INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE INITIATIVE IN THE RUSSIAN ARCTIC (ISIRA)

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*Note (February 2020): The ISIRA Delegates are currently considering Terms of Reference for ISIRA. Draft Terms of Reference are available in the IASC Dropbox.*

The **International Science Initiative in the Russian Arctic (ISIRA)** is a Russian and international cooperative initiative to assist Arctic science and sustainable development in the Russian Arctic. ISIRA's objectives include:

- Initiating planning of multinational research programs that address specific key scientific problems in the Russian Arctic;
- Providing a forum for linking on-going or planned bilateral projects;
- Facilitating improved scientific access to the Russian Arctic;
- Advising on funding and implementation of projects.

Activities include:

- Reporting on international science activities and initiatives in the Russian Arctic;
- Providing up-to-date information on policies, regulations and logistics within the Russian Arctic;
- Supporting Russian and international early career scientists.

Deliverables are:

- Comprehensive national inventories of past, ongoing and planned international and bilateral science projects and initiatives in the Russian Arctic;
- Reports of annual ISIRA meetings, including presentations of IASC supported early career scientists;
- Information on scientific access to the Russian Arctic.

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#### 4.5. SUSTAINING ARCTIC OBSERVING NETWORKS (SAON)

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The **Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON)** is a joint initiative of the Arctic Council (via AMAP, the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme) and IASC that aims to strengthen multinational engagement in pan-Arctic observing. SAON's vision is a connected, collaborative, and comprehensive long-term pan-Arctic Observing System that serves societal needs. SAON's mission is to facilitate, coordinate, and advocate for coordinated international pan-Arctic observations and mobilizes the support needed to sustain them.

IASC nominates the vice-chair of the SAON Board. However, SAON is not bound to the rules and procedures of either the Arctic Council or IASC. SAON maintains its own terms of reference. More information is available at <https://www.arcticobserving.org/>

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#### 4.6. ARCTIC DATA COMMITTEE (ADC)

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The overarching purpose of the Arctic Data Committee (ADC) is to promote and facilitate international collaboration towards the goal of free, ethically open, sustained and timely access to Arctic data through useful, usable, and interoperable systems.

The ADC will:

- Advise IASC and SAON on matters related to data management and data sharing.
- Contribute to the understanding of the nature and structure of the Arctic data system in the context of the global data system.
- Promote and enable ethically open access to data, norms of fair attribution and use of data, and long term preservation of data
- Facilitate the adoption, implementation and development (where necessary) of standards that will enable free, open and timely access to data.
- Facilitate interoperability of data and systems as needed to support the needs of researchers, Arctic residents, decision makers and others.
- Coordinate the review of data management plans submitted for consideration by IASC.

More information and procedures are available via <https://arcticdc.org/>.

The IASC Data Statement is posted at <https://iasc.info/data-observations/iasc-data-statement>.

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#### 4.7. IASC MEDAL

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IASC Medals are awarded in recognition of exceptional and sustained contributions to the understanding of the Arctic. A maximum of one award is made each year, assuming that there is a nominee of appropriate quality. The award of medals is normally by the President of IASC during the Arctic Science Summit Week (or exceptionally at another major international meeting) following the ratification of the award.

Nominations for the IASC Medal can be submitted to the IASC Secretariat until 31 December each year. A Medal Committee will consider the nominations received and the Medal will be awarded at the Arctic Science Summit Week the following year.

The Medal Committee is made up of 5 individuals (from the Council, Working Groups, and one Fellow) who represent a diversity of countries and scientific backgrounds. They decide on a short list in January, which is publicly announced immediately; this also provides the opportunity for statements of concern or complaint to be submitted. The Executive Committee reviews and approves the Medal Committee's process and recommendations, after which a winner is announced.

See **Annex F** for the **full IASC Medal procedures and selection rubric**.

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## 4.8. CAPACITY BUILDING

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IASC is committed to building Arctic research capacity (see Strategic Plan, **Annex B**). It does this in various ways, including:

- Requesting that Working Groups allocate at least one third of their budgets supporting early career researchers
- Supporting Indigenous participation in Arctic Science Summit Week
- Establishing and continuing the **IASC Fellowship Program** (see **Annex G**) at times in cooperation with other partners.
- Partnering with organizations like Polar Educators International on other educational and capacity building activities

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## 5. IASC FINANCES

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The IASC Secretariat budget (provided by the host country) is managed by the Executive Secretary in consultation with the host country, following the rules and procedures of the host institution.

The **IASC General Funds** (provided by member country contributions) budget allocations are recommended by the Executive Committee, approved by Council, and managed by the Executive Secretary in consultation with the President (and Executive Committee, when appropriate).

- Two levels of contributions, for countries with smaller or larger Arctic research programs, are 13,000 Euro and 16,000 Euro; national adhering bodies self-assign their tier.
- The IASC Working Group and Standing Committee budgets come from the IASC General Funds and subsequently allocated by the Working Groups and Standing Committees, following rules determined by the IASC Council.
  - Working Groups / Standing Committees are allowed to roll over up to 25% of a year's allocated budget to the next yet. Working Groups are allowed to also over-budget by up

to 25% in order to minimize rollover. Any over-spend is then applied to the following year.

- Working Groups must allocate at least 40% of their budgets to “cross-cutting activities”, defined as activities with budgets shared with other Working Groups.
- See Appendix X for the IASC Workshop / Activity Proposal.
- IASC expects activities and initiatives to allocate at least 33% of scientific funds to support early career researchers.
- Allocations for General Fund budget lines are made by the end of the calendar year, to be expended through ASSW the following year. This, by design, creates some overlaps of fiscal years to allow for allocating and coordinating IASC finances at ASSW each year.

Both IASC budgets are annual audited with the cooperation of the Secretariat host institution.

In any given year, if it should be necessary for a member country to defer their membership contribution payment to IASC for the upcoming year it must:

- **inform the IASC Secretariat before the start of the calendar year for which the membership contribution payment will be deferred (no later than December)**
- send a justification for the need for the deferral of payment to the IASC Secretariat, which will inform the IASC Executive Committee.
- pay the outstanding membership contribution within 12 months after the year for which the membership contribution had been deferred.

Deferring the payment of the IASC membership contribution is possible for a **maximum of two consecutive years**.

Should a member country be unable to pay its membership contribution for two consecutive years, the **membership of that country in IASC will be put on hold until**

- at least one of the outstanding membership contributions are received and
- a plan is provided for future regular payments of the membership contribution

If a membership is put on hold:

- the country will temporarily lose their voting privilege on the IASC Council and other IASC committees
- the Council member may continue to attend Council meetings as an observer without voting rights.
- current committee members of this country (e.g. in the IASC Working Groups) may continue to serve on their WGs (without voting right) for the remainder of their current membership term but cannot be extended.
- the country may not nominate new committee members to e.g. the IASC Working Groups.

- researchers of all career stages from this country may not apply for IASC travel support or fellowships.

**If the membership of a country has been on hold for 2 or more years** the country must demonstrate to the IASC Council at its next meeting that they **have a continuing Arctic research commitment and a possibility to return to full membership status within a reasonable time**. Failing such demonstration, the Council may vote to lapse their membership.

If the membership lapses, scientists from this country are still welcome to participate in ASSWs or other IASC-sponsored activities on the same basis as non-member countries.

The country has the possibility to **re-apply for IASC membership in the future should the country again meet the IASC membership criteria**. At the time of re-application, the country is **not obligated to pay delinquent membership contributions**.

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## 6. UPDATING THE IASC HANDBOOK

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The Executive Committee should ensure that the Handbook remains an accurate, up to date and effective means of conveying the processes and procedures of IASC for both external and internal users.

Proposed changes to the Handbook will be considered by the Executive Committee as needed, in discussion with the Executive Secretary. Proposed changes to the Handbook will be brought to the attention of the Council for discussion and agreement.

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## 7. ANNEXES

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- Annex A: IASC Founding Articles
- Annex B: IASC Strategic Plan 2023-2026
- Annex C: Working Group Terms of Reference
- Annex D: Standing Committee on Indigenous Involvement Terms of Reference
- Annex E: Arctic Observing Summit Procedures and Processes
- Annex F: IASC Medal Processes
- Annex G: IASC Fellowship Program Terms of Reference and Guidelines