



Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

between the Asian Forum for Polar Sciences, the International Arctic Science Committee and the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research

1. The Parties

The Parties to this MoU are the Asian Forum for Polar Sciences (AFoPS), the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), and the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR).

1.1 Asian Forum for Polar Sciences

The Asian Forum for Polar Sciences is an international organization of the national operators and research institutes in Asian countries. The AFoPS was established in 2004 to encourage and facilitate cooperation for the advancement of polar sciences among countries in the Asian region. It has served as an important medium of collective endeavors in human and information exchange, research collaboration, and logistics cooperation among the Asian polar science institutions. At present, the AFoPS consists of six Members - China, India, Japan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, and Thailand with more Asian countries as observers.

1.2 International Arctic Science Committee

The International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) is an International Scientific Associate of the International Science Council (ISC), and was established in 1990. IASC's mission is to initiate, develop and coordinate leading edge scientific research in the Arctic region and on the role of the Arctic region in the Earth system. It also provides objective and independent scientific advice to the Arctic Council and other organizations on issues of science affecting the management of the Arctic region. IASC's geographical remit covers the Arctic Ocean and the surrounding landmasses.

1.3 Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research

The Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) is a thematic organization of the International Science Council (ISC). It was established in 1958 during the International Geophysical Year of 1957-58. Its mission is to initiate, develop, and coordinate high quality international scientific research in the Antarctic region and on the role of the Antarctic region in the Earth system. In addition, it provides objective and independent scientific advice to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings and other organizations on issues of science and conservation affecting the management of Antarctica, such as the UNFCCC and IPCC. SCAR's remit covers Antarctica and the surrounding Southern Ocean including the Antarctic Circumpolar Current and sub-Antarctic Islands.

2. Rationale for the MoU

The Parties to the MoU share the common goal of working internationally on polar science and technology to increase our understanding of Earth's Polar Regions and their connections to the global system.

The purpose of the present MoU is to foster cooperation between IASC, SCAR and the AFoPS members, and to lay the foundation for a joint effort in developing international programs and initiatives based on scientific priorities, scientific excellence and shared use of Asian Antarctic and Arctic infrastructures for scientific and technological purposes, as well as increasing the engagement of Asian Scientists in both IASC and SCAR activities.

The Parties recognize their common interest to increase cooperation between IASC, SCAR and the Asian entities undertaking polar research and managing the research infrastructures, taking advantage of the complementarities of the three signatory organizations. AFoPS, through its member organizations, provides the "Asian dimension" with a bi-polar approach, with a remit that covers terrestrial and marine infrastructure and the capacity to involve national scientific or funding agencies in Asia. Through their network of scientists and groups, IASC and SCAR provide scientific priorities, facilitate international cooperation, initiate, develop, and coordinate high quality international scientific research in the Arctic and Antarctic regions and on their role of in the Earth system.

This MoU is without prejudice to the application of rights and obligations pursuant to the Antarctic Treaty System and Arctic Council and to former agreements, arrangements or letters of intent which may bind the Signatories.

3. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

IASC, SCAR and AFoPS are committed to ensuring that the opportunities provided through their 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. IASC, SCAR and AFoPS recognize that forms of systemic discrimination intersect with each other and present unique challenges for individuals and communities.

IASC, SCAR and AFoPS are committed to ensuring a safe, productive and welcoming environment for all, and to take practical measures to progress these commitments through combined actions in support of the polar research community.

4. Terms of Agreement

This MoU identifies the following commitments:

- a. The signatory Parties recognize each other as key organizations for Polar research.
- b. The AFoPS will contribute to the identification and facilitate the implementation at the Asian level of those priority scientific topics identified by SCAR (in the South) and IASC (in the North) that are particularly relevant from the Asian perspective.
- c. The AFoPS will support the priorities identified by SCAR and IASC by development of joint scientific programs, by optimized participation of Asian scientists and by representation of polar issues within research programs of AFoPS Member institutions.

In particular:

- i. Enhancing cooperation between relevant Asian and non-Asian countries involved in Polar research.
 - ii. Coordinating the Asian partnership to the Southern Ocean Observing System (SOOS), the Antarctic Near-shore and Terrestrial Observing System (ANTOS), the Sustaining Arctic Observing Network (SAON) and other polar observing networks.
- d. The signatory Parties will cooperate and mutually support the development and implementation of concepts and best practices for joint use of polar infrastructure, of relevant interest for the Parties, recognizing the key roles of COMNAP (in the south) and FARO (in the north) in matters of operation.

- e. The signatory Parties will discuss initiating joint projects of mutual benefit, including cooperation in the management and mutual accessibility of databases and other IT facilities.
- f. The signatory Parties will reciprocally communicate updates, newsletters, and other information of interest. They will cooperate as well on relevant outreach and polar science communication activities.
- g. The signatory Parties will provide mutual assistance in identifying experts for scientific evaluations of proposals.
- h. The signatory Parties will collaborate in joint organization of workshops, conferences, and reports on topics of mutual interest.
- i. The signatory Parties endeavor to continue supporting the next generation of polar researchers.

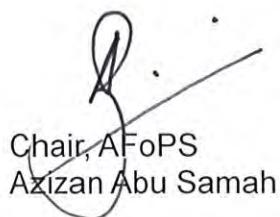
A task group made by one member plus the Executive Directors/Secretaries of each Party will meet on a regular basis to review joint initiatives. Representatives of the Parties are invited to attend major meetings and activities of the other Parties.

5. Financial implications of the Agreement


Parties to this Agreement will continue to be responsible for the costs of their own activities, but this does not preclude one party meeting or contributing to the occasional or on-going costs of another if they so wish.

6. Duration, Revision and Termination of this MoU

This MoU remains in force for 5 years, at which time it will be reviewed for possible extension. The MoU may be revised at any time by mutual agreement between the Parties. Any of the parties may propose alterations to the MoU, Parties wishing to withdraw from this agreement should do so by a formal letter signed by the President and head organizational manager (i.e. Executive Secretary or Director) of their respective organization.


Chair, AFoPS
Azizan Abu Samah

President, IASC
Larry Hinzman


President, SCAR
Yeadong Kim

Date of signature: