

Arctic Ocean Sciences Board

Interim Terms of Reference (Thru 2008)

Background

The Arctic Ocean Sciences Board (AOSB) was established in May 1984 to coordinate the priorities and programs of countries and institutions engaged in marine research in the Arctic Ocean and adjacent seas. It is a non-governmental body that includes members from research and government institutions from 15 countries, all of which support research in the Arctic.

Mission

The mission of the AOSB is to facilitate Arctic Ocean research by supporting multinational and cross-disciplinary natural science and engineering programs.

This mission will be achieved by:

- Encouraging and supporting science-led international programs by offering opportunities for planning and coordination, and by facilitating communication and access to facilities;
- Encouraging the exchange and dissemination of information on the Arctic Ocean and adjacent seas;
- Encouraging means of initiating and maintaining observational systems and the data they produce, and coordinating with other long-term observational programs in the Arctic and globally;
- Ensuring interaction between the Arctic science community and those concerned with Arctic policy;
- Promoting conferences and educational events; and
- Promoting future generations of Arctic marine scientists.

Membership

Any country engaged in Arctic marine research may request membership in the AOSB. Members are appointed to the AOSB by their countries for four-year terms with the possibility of one reappointment. Members must be well-connected within their country's Arctic science community. Members must submit written annual reports to the Board during the annual meeting which is normally held during the Arctic Science Summit Week. They may, on occasion, send a designee when they are unable to attend.

Other international non-governmental organizations devoted to some aspect of Arctic and/or marine sciences wishing to cooperate with the AOSB may apply for ex officio membership on the Board. The Steering Group, where appropriate, may conclude a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the applying organization to facilitate cooperation and communication between the organizations.

Structure

The Board selects a Chair and two Vice-chairs to serve for two-year terms. A steering group (SG) composed of the Chair, the two Vice Chairs, the Past Chair, the host of the next Board meeting and the secretary meet at least once during the year to plan for the next meeting and take action on other business as necessary. The Board meets annually, normally at the time of the Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW).

Meetings

AOSB meetings are normally held annually during the ASSW. The agenda for the annual meeting will be submitted to members at least two months in advance. Members must present additional items for the agenda at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Members are responsible for travel expenses incurred while attending AOSB meetings.

Decision making during the meeting is by consensus.

Programs

The Board may provide seed money for science projects to promote research in an area where there is a perceived gap in knowledge. These projects must be international and should be multidisciplinary and where possible pan-Arctic in nature. Depending upon available funds, the Board may designate up to \$6,000 per year for up to three years in seed money for the project. The seed money may only be used to support research planning. At least part of the seed money should be used to support the participation of young scientists in the planning process.

Individual scientists or members of AOSB may propose a project to be supported. They must submit a written request to the Board. A preliminary evaluation of the merits of the proposal will be provided by the SG and reviewed by the full Board at its annual meeting. The criteria for such evaluation will be whether or not the proposal is international in nature, fills a perceived gap in knowledge, and is supported by at least three member countries.

When the Board approves a project it will:

- Provide a terms of reference;
- Provide suggestions for membership on a small working group to develop the science plan for the project; and
- Provide a budget of up to \$6,000 per year for three years.

An approved project must:

- Identify a project leader and a small working group to assist with project development;
- Hold at least one annual meeting of the working group to develop a science plan and implementation plan for the project; and
- Submit an annual report, to include a budget, to the AOSB two months prior to the AOSB annual meeting.

A project may be terminated if the Board determines that it has not met the minimum requirements as stated above.

Relationship with other International Science Organizations

AOSB maintains active linkages with the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) and provides oversight for the International Study on Arctic Change (ISAC). In addition, it maintains informal ties with other Arctic organizations, including the European Polar Board (EPB), the Pacific Arctic Group (PAG), and the Forum of Arctic Research Operators (FARO).

AOSB also maintains communication with the Climate and Cryosphere (CliC) program of the World Climate Research Program (WCRP), the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) and the Scientific Committee on Ocean Research (SCOR) of the International Council for Science (ICSU).

Secretariat

The secretariat is responsible for supporting the Board and its programs and objectives. It does so by:

- Organizing the annual meeting;
- Preparing and printing the meeting minutes and the annual report;
- Preparing and printing newsletters as determined by the SG;
- Organizing symposia and workshops as determined by the Board;
- Identifying ways to enhance cooperation among members;
- Identifying ways to enhance interaction with the Arctic science community;
- Identifying ways to enhance interaction with global programs engaged in ocean sciences and global observational systems;
- Participating in the International Coordinating Group of the ASSW and organizing aspects of the ASSW; and
- Maintaining the budget in consultation with the Steering Group.

The secretariat currently is funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation until 2009. Current funding supports:

- The secretariat (part-time staff person);
- Travel for the secretary;
- Meeting costs;
- Report and newsletter printing costs;
- Web site maintenance expenses;
- Three AOSB sponsored projects; and
- Other travel and expenditures as deemed necessary by the Steering Group.

The Steering Group shall review the activities of the secretariat at its regular meetings.

Review and Evaluation

The AOSB will appoint a small external review and strategy group to provide input and advice once every eight years. Funding to support the group will be provided by the Secretariat and \$1,000 per year will be set aside for this purpose to be allocated at the time of the review.