Governance review

A discussion paper for SAON Board meeting 13th May 2020

By Jan Rene Larsen SAON Secretary, version 5th May 2020

Background

The discussion is triggered by several developments, including discussions within CON, the Arctic Observing Summit and Arctic Council Working Groups.

The discussion is also connected to the process for updating the ROADS document for submission to ASM3.

CON

At the Board meeting 8th April 2020, the CON chair, Lisa Loseto, made a presentation titled ‘Architecture considerations for SAON CON’, which was mainly meant to address chairmanship and composition of CON. It, however, also outlined a structure for establishing working groups under CON.

AOS

An observation from AOS is that the SAON ROADS process was guiding for the work in the working groups. Another observation is that several working groups saw an interest in continuing their work beyond the AOS meeting. Some of these have in reality been active since 2018, especially those that are engaged in design and implementation. The data group and its close linkage to ADC is another example. The working groups have been a very energetic forum for addressing topics that are of relevance to SAON.

AC WGs

Another development has been that especially within AMAP, there has been a discussion about how to strengthen the relationship between AMAP and SAON. It has been proposed that AC and AC WG’s goals and objectives are mapped against SAON’s.

National engagement

A comment sometimes raised to on engagement in SAON is that it is difficult to understand where the national mandate for SAON comes from, compared to say GEO, IOC or WMO.

It is a relevant perspective for a governance discussion to revisit the concept of national SAON organisations or focal points. In most countries these are not very well established or active.

The ROADS process

The definition of the Roadmap is to be finalised and the process is also a partnership tool, also with AOS. It is time to decide on how such a partnership is going to be defined and how different partners in the process interact with each other.

For the finalisation of the document, one option is to ask a representative from each of the AOS working groups to join the Roadmap Task Force. Some are representatives already, what is probably missing is working group 2 and 3.

Organising a series of Retreats

The proposal is to organise a series of ½ day virtual retreats. Topics could be

* Reviewing the governance of SAON and CON in relationship with AOS and its working groups
* How to strengthen the relationship with Arctic Council working groups.
* National engagement, mandate and focal points.
* Governance for the ROADS process

The timeframe and a (manageable) list of participants for these should be defined as should the questions that retreats should address.

Helen Joseph, Canada should be asked to be a Facilitator for the proposed Retreats. When SAON was established, she was the representative for Canada at the SAON Board. She has been working for DFO and is now an independent consultant. She was leading the external review of SAON.

Together with Lisa Loseto and Jan Rene Larsen, she was the author of two SAON related papers submitted to the AOS2020.