Background

During the SAON Frascati workshop in 2017, Lars-Otto Reiersen (Executive Secretary of AMAP), had outlined the current funding arrangement for the SAON Secretariat: Since 2011, the Norwegian government had funded a full-time position through the annual contribution to the AMAP Secretariat. In 2017, the support had been reduced, and he saw a risk that it would disappear. The workshop decided to establish a task force that should identity possibilities for the funding of the Secretariat. These should be short term as well as long term.

Members of the task force are Allen Pope, Larry D. Hinzman, Nicole Biebow, Sandy Starkweather, Will Ambrose, and Yuji Kodama. The task force has met four times in the autumn 2017.

The 2018 budget for the Secretariat is found in Appendix 1. A description of the Secretariat assignments can be found in Appendix 2.

SAON Secretariat Task Force

The Task Force has had four meetings through autumn 2017. The discussion has focused on these funding sources:

* The Chairmanship should write to member countries and organisations, asking them to pay an annual contribution. There should be different letters; some for countries, other would be to organisations and NGOs. The model could involve a graduation so that large countries pay 10 k€, while small pay 5 k€. Contact to some countries has already been established.
* Applications to funding agencies. The basis for such applications should be the strategic plan, and should involve some concrete deliverables as an outcome of e.g. a three year task. Examples from the Committee’s work plan could be inventories, gap analyses, etc. The issue for institutions like NSF would be that the money would have to be administered by a national institution that could spend the money on travel and meeting support, but only on salaries to a minor extent.
* Consider the mechanism of a rotating grant, where a country hosts the secretariat for say 5 years.

Concern has been raised about the practicalities related to transferring a contribution to the AMAP Secretariat. The AMAP Secretariat is a legal entity and can consequently make legally binding agreement. This would usually involve signing a MoU, establishing a partnership agreement or similar. It has been proposed that a contribution to the SAON Secretariat could be paid through an increased contribution to the IASC Secretariat (where formalities are already in place), earmarking the increased contribution as a contribution to the SAON Secretariat.

SAON Executive Recommendations

* Chairmanship to write to countries and organisations, asking them to provide a (graduated) annual contribution to the SAON Secretariat
* Establish a dialogue with Committee chairs, identifying projects that could be supported by grants from funding organisations. Such projects should have a basis in the strategic plan, have a fixed duration and a product outcome.

Appendix 1. SAON Secretariat budget for 2018

Expenses:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Amount (k€) | Comment |
| Salary, social security, office | 120 | The cost of a full-time staff member at the AMAP Secretariat is estimated as 1.2 mio NOK / 120 k€ |
| Travel | 20 | The Secretary attends meetings of the Board and Committees and represents SAON at various other meetings. In some cases, the Secretariat has also covered travelling expenses for indigenous participation and Committee chairs’ attendance in relevant meetings, etc. |
| Meeting expenses | 5 | The Secretariat covers the expenses associated with the meetings of the Board and Committees. The costs are meeting rooms, catering, internet connections, etc. |
| Total | 145 |  |

Income:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Amount (k€) |
| Member fee | 55 |
| Contribution from Norway (expected) | 90 |
| Total | 145 |

Appendix 2. SAON Secretariat assignments for 2018

Support the SAON institutions: Board, Committees (2), and Executive. This involves arranging and participating in the meetings and drafting the meeting papers and minutes.

Organising SAON web site, newsletter and brochure.

Organise reporting to SAON ‘parents’, mainly AMAP and Arctic Council.

Support SAON chairmanship (preparation of presentations for meetings).

Participate in and represent SAON at different fora like Arctic Circle, Arctic Observing Summit, and WMO meetings (EC-PHORS, GCW, IPET-OSDE).

Represent SAON in the Arctic Observing Summit Executive Committee (*ex-officio*).

Maintain and update SAON inventories on observational capacity.