

Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON)

Data Management/Portal Breakout Group – Briefing Note

Background

Data management is highlighted in the SAON Vision and Goal:

SAON Vision: "... that users should have *access to free, open and high quality data* that will realize pan-Arctic and global value-added services and provide societal benefits."

SAON Goal: "... to enhance Arctic-wide observing activities through coordination and integration and to *promote sharing and synthesis of data and information.*"

The Helsinki workshop is the third SAON workshop and it is therefore appropriate to build on the outcome of the previous workshops. The reports of the Stockholm (2007) and Edmonton (2008) SAON workshops can be found at www.arcticobserving.org.

At the Edmonton workshop a *Cyberinfrastructure and Data Management* group addressed the question: How will Arctic observing and data and information management activities be coordinated and sustained over the long-term? This group concluded that a 'web-based data portal' would constitute a 'critical component of SAON' to provide user products (to many 'users' with different needs), also noting that several systems/models are available to build on. The SAON portal will need to meet the changing needs of a diverse user community and link to other disciplinary, regional and global observing entities and data centres. This is a significant challenge that has no obvious analogue.

Workshop Objective

The breakout group task is to *'further define the data portal idea and how to implement it'*.

The objective of the Helsinki workshop is to develop a set of *recommendations* on how to attain the SAON vision and meet the SAON goal, with a focus on implementation and prioritisation. These recommendations will be presented to the Arctic Council and SAON-IG member organizations by the SAON-IG in order to secure the necessary funding to further develop the SAON.

A set of draft recommendations has been circulated to workshop participants. The breakout groups should review these with a view to further developing and enhancing, in particular, those parts relating to SAON data management.

Common Usage of Some Key Terms

In order to avoid confusion in the discussions, it is important that all participants have a common understanding of some of the terms and concepts that are likely to be employed, such as 'data' portal as distinct from 'information' portal; (measurement) data; meta-data; data products; data-management; data centres; geospatial data; real-time data, etc. A 'glossary' with suggested 'working-definitions' to be applied during the breakout group discussions will be introduced at the start of this session.

Questions to Stimulate Breakout-group Discussion

- Are we talking about SAON Data Management or a just a Portal?
- Do we agree with the conclusion that the way forward is a data portal?
- Who should a SAON portal serve?

- What functions will a SAON portal need to provide?
- Should we develop a new portal or use existing portal(s)?
- What, if any, are the development priorities?
- What are the barriers and obstacles to a functional portal?
- How can we ensure that the observing network(s) will provide the meta-data that is a prerequisite for a functioning portal?
- How should a SAON portal be operated, maintained and supported?
- How do we proceed to address the many issues that need to be considered in more detail?
- If a portal is a first stage in SAON data management – what about the rest?
- What further recommendations are needed to convey the scope and developmental priorities to the Arctic Council (and other governmental and policy-makers).
- What other questions do you think need to be addressed?

Presentations

Introduction by Chairs

Input to the breakout group discussions:

Glossary of terms and working definitions

List of useful examples of Arctic (and non-Arctic) data and information portals

(suggestions from participants for these are most welcome and can be sent to s.wilson@inter.nl.net and ctweddie@utep.edu)