



**HORIZON 2020**

**Coordination and Support Action**

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**CONNECTING SCIENCE WITH SOCIETY**

Deliverable D1.4

Minutes of a workshop with international partners & stakeholders, at an Arctic/Antarctic Meeting

## Submission of Deliverable

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## 1. Introduction

Due to the remoteness of the polar areas and the high costs associated with research there, polar scientists and infrastructure providers already have a long tradition of cooperating with each other on an international level. Nevertheless, to significantly improve the output and outcomes of polar research and the access to national infrastructures or territories this international cooperation still needs to be improved and new partners on the EU and international level have to be involved.

In particular, bridges between Northern and Southern organizations should be built, involving primarily the managers of European Polar research infrastructures but also those other non-European countries that maintain a long history of cooperation.

The general aim of the Task 1.3 *“Strengthen international cooperation and implement the Transatlantic Research Alliance”* is therefore to establish and secure a reliable cooperation between EU-PolarNet and third-countries carrying out research activities in the Polar Regions, and foster active collaboration with these partners.

The present Deliverable D1.4 is focusing on possible interactions between EU-PolarNet and international organizations formally in charge of the logistics and maintenance of Polar research infrastructures in Arctic and Antarctic.

It is based on a formal meeting organized in Brno (Czech Republic) at the initiative of EU-PolarNet between EU-PolarNet, COMNAP (Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs), FARO (Forum of Arctic Research Operators) and the EU funded infrastructure project INTERACT, which are three key international actors in supporting Antarctic and Arctic Research.

The new relationships expected between these organizations will contribute to support the EU-PolarNet WPs 2, 3 and 4 in establishing and maintaining relations with international partners and organizations to support Polar Research.

## 2. Organisation of the meeting and attendees

At the initiative of EU-PolarNet, COMNAP invited FARO, INTERACT, EU-PolarNet and the European Polar Board (EPB) representatives to attend the COMNAP Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Brno, Czech Republic (31 July–2 August 2017), in order to make these European or Arctic organizations aware of the COMNAP activities and explore the possibilities of joint actions.

FARO and INTERACT had the opportunity to present their organizations during the AGM Plenary. The following discussion demonstrated that COMNAP and both Arctic organizations have many similarities in their objectives and activities.

To further the exchange between the Arctic and Antarctic organizations, a more formal meeting was organized during a lunch offered by COMNAP on August 1<sup>st</sup> 2017.

### **The meeting was attended by:**

1. COMNAP: Kazuyuki Shiraishi (Chair), Michelle Rogan-Finnemore (Exec. Sec.), Javed Beg, Yves Frenot, John Guldahl, Jose Retamales, Rob Wooding
2. FARO: Elmer Topp-Jørgensen (Exec. Sec.)
3. INTERACT : Morten Rasch
4. EU-PolarNet : Nicole Biebow

5. European Polar Board: Maaïke Vancauvenberghe (Chair)

### 3. Brief presentation of COMNAP, FARO and INTERACT



Formed in 1988, COMNAP is the international association, which brings together its members, who are the 30 National Antarctic Programs. National Antarctic Programs are those organizations that have responsibility for delivering and supporting scientific research in the Antarctic Treaty Area on behalf of their respective governments and in the spirit of the Antarctic Treaty. COMNAP's purpose is to "develop and promote best practice in managing the support of scientific research in Antarctica". It does this by:

- Serving as a forum to develop practices that improve effectiveness of activities in an environmentally responsible manner;
- Facilitating and promoting international partnerships;
- Providing opportunities and systems for information exchange; and
- Providing the Antarctic Treaty System with objective and practical, technical and non-political advice drawn from the National Antarctic Programs' pool of expertise.

National Antarctic Programs collectively have the greatest first-hand experience of living and working in the Antarctic. Many of the National Antarctic Programs have operated in the Antarctic since the International Geophysical Year (IGY) of 1957/58.



The Forum of Arctic Research Operators (FARO) is an international forum for information exchange, cooperation and development of new ideas among national operators of research infrastructure in the Arctic. FARO is operated by an Executive Committee (ExComm) drawn from its membership with an overall Chair of the organization. There is a secretariat to support communications throughout the year. The organization is supported by annual subscriptions from the members. FARO today has 20 member countries and annual meetings are held every year at the Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW).

FARO aims to facilitate and optimise logistics and operational support for scientific research in the Arctic. The forum encourages international collaboration for all those involved in Arctic research.



International Network for Terrestrial Research and Monitoring in the Arctic (INTERACT) is an international network of terrestrial research stations in the Arctic and northern alpine areas (currently ca. 80 member stations). The project, which is funded by the EU, has a main objective to build capacity for identifying, understanding, predicting and responding to changes throughout the wide environmental and land-use envelopes of the Arctic and alpine areas of the Northern Hemisphere. The INTERACT network of field stations provides a unique platform for terrestrial sciences and the network hosts and operates top level research and monitoring projects and programmes within a wide range of scientific disciplines. Together, the stations in INTERACT host thousands of scientists from around the world who work on projects within the fields of glaciology, permafrost, climate, ecology, biodiversity and biogeochemical cycling.

#### 4. Identification of subjects of common interest

The 3 days of the COMNAP Meeting as well as the dedicated meeting organized on 1st August identified several issues of common interest.

##### **Between FARO and COMNAP:**

- Facilitate infrastructure cooperation between poles
- Facilitate science cooperation between the poles
- Developing polar infrastructure catalogues (marine, terrestrial and airborne infrastructure) further, based on the EU-PolarNet D3.2
- Sharing best practices on infrastructure management, risk management, environmental management etc.
- Sharing technological developments

##### **Between INTERACT and COMNAP:**

- Facilitate bi-polar cooperation at terrestrial field sites
- Developing polar infrastructure catalogues (terrestrial infrastructures) based on the INTERACT example
- Sharing best practices on infrastructure management, risk management, environmental management
- Project based knowledge transfer between poles on different issues, e.g. ZERO Emission Stations, Safety Issues, Data Management, Risk Warning Systems etc.

## 5. Identification of immediate actions

According to the discussion held between the COMNAP EXCOM Members and the invited representatives of FARO and INTERACT, several immediate actions were considered:

1. COMNAP will ask its members who are also FARO Members and/or INTERACT Partners what are, in their view, the key issues which could be shared / discussed between the 3 organizations for mutual benefit
2. COMNAP will inform its members about the workshop organized by INTERACT in Austria in March 2018 about “energy efficiencies”. This topic has already been discussed by COMNAP but some National Antarctic Programs could be interested in participating in such a workshop and share their own experience in Antarctic activities.
3. INTERACT will hold its annual meeting 2018 in Longyearbyen, Svalbard. The meeting includes a workshop on drones and sensor technologies and a COMNAP representative will be invited.
4. “New technologies” are among the main topics of common interest. COMNAP AGM expressed its interest in developing innovative systems to automatically run scientific / technical devices in remote Polar Regions. It may be that similar technologies are needed in the Arctic. Depending on the feasibility, a joint symposium could be organized in Garmisch-Partenkirchen (Germany), few days in advance of the SCAR/IASC meeting in Davos (Switzerland) in June 2018.
5. Finally, a session in the Davos meeting mentioned above, is already dedicated to “Bipolar activities” with a symposium organized by COMNAP on the support of “big science” in the polar areas. It would be another opportunity to develop exchanges between the three organizations.

## 6. Preliminary conclusion

As a preliminary conclusion, according to the discussions held in Brno, the major topics of joint interest between COMNAP, FARO and INTERACT focused on the exchange of best practices in 4 specific areas:

- Infrastructure management and logistic coordination (Icebreaker, planes, helicopters, stations, UAS/ROV, etc.)
- Risk management (health and safety/environment) and Search and Rescue (SAR)
- Development of new technologies (logistics and science)
- Implementation of science agendas (Science coordination and human impact on Polar Regions, incl. impact of plastics, black carbon etc.)