

## **COMNAP Constitution**

### **Adopted in Plenary Friday 04 July 2008**

#### Preamble

##### ***Supporting Science***

What member National Antarctic Programs have in common is their national responsibility to manage the support of scientific research in the Antarctic Treaty Area.

Consistent with this, COMNAP's primary mission is to develop and promote best practice in managing the support of scientific research in the Antarctic.

##### ***Supporting the Antarctic Treaty System***

COMNAP is committed to serve its role in the Antarctic Treaty System and in the protection of the Antarctic environment by providing objective and practical, technical and non-political advice drawn from the National Antarctic Programs' pool of expertise.

##### ***COMNAP Origins***

The Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs (COMNAP) was formally created on 15 September 1988 to bring together the *Managers of National Antarctic Programs*, the officials responsible for carrying out national activity in the Antarctic on behalf of their governments - all Parties to the Antarctic Treaty.

Until then, Managers of National Antarctic Programs only met informally on the margins of other meetings that they attended: meetings of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR – a non-governmental organisation), and Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings (ATCMs).

Some of their staff members were members of the SCAR Working Group on Logistics, which was then transformed into the Standing Committee on Antarctic Logistics and Operations (SCALOP) - a group that had a special status as it was under the authority of both COMNAP and SCAR.

COMNAP maintains a special, complementary relationship with SCAR. The Executives of both organisations meet annually and both organisations attempt to coordinate their bi-annual meetings so as to facilitate cross-participation in both meetings.

COMNAP immediately started contributing positively to the Antarctic Treaty System and was very quickly formally recognised as a valuable member of the Treaty System. It was invited to provide a report to the ATCM as early as 1991 (XVI ATCM, Bonn, Germany, 07-18 Oct 1991). XVI ATCM *recognised the important role of COMNAP in examining and solving practical problems relating to the implementation of scientific activities and their associated logistics* (refer XVI ATCM final report, paragraph 23). Since then, COMNAP has had the status of observer at ATCMs.

## COMNAP Constitution

### 1 General

- 1.1 Each signatory to the Antarctic Treaty normally establishes a “National Antarctic Program”. The National Antarctic Program is defined as the entity with national responsibility for managing the support of scientific research in the Antarctic Treaty Area on behalf of its government and in the spirit of the Antarctic Treaty.
- 1.2 Those National Antarctic Programs can choose to become a member of the Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs, hereafter referred to as COMNAP.
- 1.3 Ultimate decision power on COMNAP matters rests with the assembly of the “Managers of National Antarctic Programs” (MNAPs) which meets in an Annual General Meeting (AGM) at a location agreed at a previous AGM. Each member National Antarctic Program has one vote at the AGM.
- 1.4 Decision making at COMNAP generally follows the principle of consensus, in its meaning of an opinion or position reached by a group as a whole. It is not intended as a de-facto right of veto given to every member.
- 1.5 MNAPs elect one COMNAP Chair and one or more COMNAP Vice-Chairs as specified in the Rules of Procedure.
- 1.6 A COMNAP Executive Committee (EXCOM) is constituted by the Chair and Vice-Chair(s), and any other persons as specified in the COMNAP Rules of Procedure. EXCOM members shall all be representatives from different member National Antarctic Programs, reflecting COMNAP's diversity and range of expertise.
- 1.7 The COMNAP Chair, with the support and advice of EXCOM, chairs the AGM and takes responsibility for COMNAP matters between AGMs .
- 1.8 COMNAP functions under the general principles of a not-for profit organisation and, for all intents and purposes, subjects itself to normal international principles and standards for organisations like COMNAP.
- 1.9 COMNAP is domiciled at its Secretariat.

### 2 Purpose

The purpose of COMNAP is to develop and promote best practice in managing the support of scientific research in Antarctica, 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

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- Providing the Antarctic Treaty System with objective and practical, technical and non-political advice drawn from the National Antarctic Programs' pool of expertise.

### 3 Membership

3.1 Membership of COMNAP is open to National Antarctic Programs, as defined in paragraph 1.1, not to individuals.

3.2 Membership of COMNAP is open to National Antarctic Programs from nations whose governments are signatories to the Antarctic Treaty and have ratified its Protocol on Environmental Protection. There can be only one member National Antarctic Program per nation.

3.3 Members must comply with this constitution and the Rules of Procedure.

3.4 While structures can differ widely from country to country, what characterises and unifies member National Antarctic Programs is their national responsibility to manage the support of scientific research in the Antarctic Treaty Area.

3.5 Each member National Antarctic Program is represented on COMNAP by a lead national agency.

3.6 Whenever this lead agency has a broader mission, only those parts of the organisation that have this national responsibility are considered part of the “National Antarctic Program” member of COMNAP.

3.7 Whenever this national responsibility is divided between several national organisations, the lead agency will, as appropriate, organise for relevant parts of the other national organisations to participate in the work of COMNAP under its authority and responsibility.

### 4 Secretariat

4.1 A COMNAP Secretariat serves and supports the functional needs of COMNAP and is accountable to the COMNAP Chair

4.2 The COMNAP Secretariat is subject to the laws and regulations of the country it is domiciled in.

### 5 COMNAP Finances

5.1 The income of COMNAP is obtained from the following:

- an equal annual contribution (“membership fee”) from each of its member National Antarctic Programs, as determined by the MNAPs at an AGM;
- any additional, voluntary contributions from member National Antarctic Programs;

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- any grants from external bodies, as and if agreed by the MNAPs at an AGM.

5.2 COMNAP funds are intended to support the internal work of COMNAP to support its activities and purpose. The level of the annual contribution should be kept under regular review to ensure it best meets the needs of COMNAP and provides best value to members.

5.3 The COMNAP budget is approved by the MNAPs at each AGM.

### 6 Representation of COMNAP

6.1 The COMNAP Chair is the official representative of COMNAP. If unavailable one of the Vice-Chairs or another representative agreed by EXCOM will represent COMNAP.

### 7 Preamble and Rules of Procedure

7.1 A Preamble and Rules of Procedure complement this constitution but are not part of it. Both are subject to the rules, principles and intent of this constitution, and can be separately amended by the MNAPS at an AGM as and when required. Any new version takes effect at the time it is approved and supersedes any previous version.

### 8 Modification of this COMNAP Constitution

8.1 This COMNAP Constitution may be modified by agreement of the MNAPs at an AGM.