

Minutes

COMNAP EXCOM Meeting

Cambridge, UK, Wednesday 03 - Thursday 04 October 2007

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Participants:

José Retamales (Chile), COMNAP Chair
Gérard Jugie (France), COMNAP past-Chair
Christo Pimpirev (Bulgaria), Member representative
Rasik Ravindra (India), Member Representative
Lou Sanson (New Zealand), Member Representative
John Pye (United Kingdom), SCALOP Chair
Antoine Guichard, COMNAP Executive Secretary

Appendices:

Appendix 1: List of meeting papers
Appendix 2: List of tasks and actions arising from the meeting

1. Opening and administrative arrangements

Papers:

Paper 01: Draft Agenda of EXCOM Meeting Cambridge 10-2007 (this document)

COMNAP Chair José Retamales opened the meeting on Wednesday 03 October 2007 at 0900 and welcomed new members Rasik Ravindra and Lou Sanson to EXCOM. Host John Pye outlined administrative arrangements.

2. Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Review of recent and current activities and issues

3.1 Current actions and tasks

Papers:

Paper 03: Draft report of COMNAP XIX meeting

Paper 04: Consolidated list of current actions and tasks as at 01 October 2007

Current actions and tasks were briefly reviewed. The Executive Secretary was tasked to propose a mechanism to better follow and track actions arising from meetings as well as group tasks.

Executive Secretary to check that we have no outstanding actions from previous years.

3.2 Any other topic or issue to flag for future discussions or action?

Two issues were flagged:

- Setting deadlines for certain tasks, eg meeting papers for ATCM or COMNAP meetings
- Importance of sticking to important deadlines or meeting dates set long in advance

This would be discussed under agenda item 5.2 “Engaging members to contribute to discussions and papers”.

4. COMNAP Constitution

Papers:

Paper 05: Draft COMNAP constitution July 2007 and comments received

Paper 06: Current draft of updated COMNAP handbook

A number of helpful comments had been received from members on specific sections of the draft constitution circulated in July. Meeting Paper 05 included a copy of the July draft in which these comments had been inserted. In addition two members, Virginia Mudie of the Australian Program and Robert Culshaw of the UK Program, had proposed complete new drafts. Virginia Mudie's new draft was accompanied by details of all changes she proposed, relative to the original draft circulated in July. These two new drafts could also be found in Meeting Paper 05. Both were shorter than the original draft, with anything non-essential or susceptible to evolve moved into the Rules of Procedure. All agreed that this was a good idea.

We now had three different draft versions of the COMNAP Constitution. The Chair noted we had two main points on which the various drafts differed significantly, which we needed to address:

- the legal status of COMNAP; and
- the status of SCALOP within COMNAP.

He invited Past-Chair Gérard Jugie, who had initiated the process, to first outline why and for what purpose we were preparing this document. This would help us in our discussions.

Gérard Jugie recalled how he was lost when he first arrived to COMNAP as quite little was written down and made clear to newcomers. “That is how we have the habit of doing it” was heard often. This was effectively resulting in high barriers to entry, which was unfortunate. This was detrimental to the effectiveness of the organisation and to a wide, diverse participation.

We needed something clear and simple that would support members' understanding of what COMNAP is and stands for and how it operates, but also reaches out and allows people outside COMNAP to know who we are and what we do. We needed a text that:

- is simple and clear – in particular as the vast majority of members will have to read it in a language other than their native language;
- is flexible;
- takes into account the reality and diversity of member National Programs' structures and needs – COMNAP follows the principle of “one Program, one vote” and we have to listen to, and hear, all members equally, without favouring the larger or longer established Programs;
- puts a clear focus and priority on what every member National Program's primary objective is: supporting and managing scientific research in the Antarctic – if that is what National Programs aim to, that is what they should help each other with within COMNAP; in particular it is important that we are not being controlled by the logistics, which is strictly an instrument in support of science, albeit a very important one.

The Chair supported these views and stressed the importance of the last point: the managers of National Antarctic Programs were responsible for supporting and managing science in the Antarctic and that is logically what their council should help them with. He noted that when he first arrived at COMNAP, he initially concluded that there was too much focus on operational matters that he had no need to know in details – this was for his staff to address and take care of. If that was how he felt, who knows how feel the managers of small Programs that have COMNAP as their only forum, or managers of Programs that have little or no logistics.

The Chair proposed that we discuss one by one the two points on which the various drafts differed significantly.

Legal status of COMNAP

The meeting was reminded that COMNAP did not have, and never had, any legal existence. Some members had been opposed to giving COMNAP a legal existence through a formal incorporation. As shown in Meeting Paper 10, COMNAP's status vis-à-vis the ATCM was also somewhat unofficial, with no standalone instrument recognising its existence and status – the current status being 'indirectly official' through a succession of ATCM report language elements.

This had already posed problems to some National Programs who had difficulties paying membership fees to an 'unofficial' body – in particular one member had already indicated that the wording “COMNAP is not a legal entity” in the draft proposed by Robert Culshaw would make it impossible for its Program to pay its fees. This could also put at risk the Executive Secretary if he/she was considered employed, insured and covered by a body with no legal existence anywhere.

The COMNAP Chair stressed that we had two distinct problems to solve:

1. We want to make sure that members can stay in COMNAP and keep paying their membership fees; and
2. We need to ensure that the Executive Secretary can be appropriately covered and protected.

The first problem could probably be solved, even if we continued to be unable to give COMNAP a legal existence, through:

- a) making sure that the COMNAP constitution did not explicitly describe COMNAP as an unofficial and/or unregistered organisation;
- b) making sure we had a constitution; then possibly later
- c) obtaining some clear(er) endorsement/recognition by the ATCM.

All agreed. The Chair noted that he had talked to Robert Culshaw who had indicated that he had no particular reason to want his proposed mention “COMNAP is not a legal entity” to be retained.

It was agreed that the Executive Secretary would liaise with the Chair and with past EXCOM member Jorge Berguño to propose some wording for the constitution that would try to convey as much 'legitimacy' as possible, and be as suitable as possible in supporting a possible future endorsement by the ATCM.

Executive Secretary to liaise with the Chair and with past EXCOM member Jorge Berguño to propose some wording for the constitution conveying as much 'legitimacy' as possible for COMNAP.

The second problem, that of protection of the Executive Secretary, could be solved through:

- a) requiring that any organisation wishing to host the COMNAP secretariat commit to formally employ, and provide adequate cover and protection to, the Executive Secretary – as was now done by the Tasmanian State Government; and
- b) continuing to work towards a more formal recognition of COMNAP as a legitimate organisation – which would make it easier for the host of the COMNAP Secretariat to cover the Executive Secretary on behalf of COMNAP.

Include in the call for proposals to host the COMNAP Secretariat a requirement that the host organisation formally employs and protects the Executive Secretary (including through both public liability and professional indemnity type insurance).

Status of SCALOP within COMNAP

It was noted that while SCALOP, or for that matter any other COMNAP subsidiary body, was not mentioned in the constitution itself, SCALOP was prominent and given a special status in the “Subsidiary Bodies” section of the current draft of COMNAP's rules of procedures.

It was also noted that SCALOP was in effect a body originating from the slightly complicated climate surrounding the creation of COMNAP in 1988. SCALOP's “special” status came from its succeeding the former SCAR Working Group on Logistics and not being solely under the authority of COMNAP but also under the authority of SCAR – the first two original terms of reference of SCALOP were:

- “1. to serve SCAR by providing advice on Antarctic operations and logistics”; and
- “2. to investigate and, if necessary, arrange for research on operational problems identified by the Council of MNAPs or by SCAR and its Working Groups.”

All agreed that it was no longer the case and, for various reasons, could no longer be the case. SCALOP was now and should remain simply a subsidiary body of COMNAP.

There were a number of questions raised to think about:

- 1) what do the National Antarctic Programs do and should operational matters have primacy within COMNAP?
- 2) is the current prominent status of SCALOP within COMNAP, as acknowledged in the draft Rules of Procedure, still justified and/or desirable?
- 3) are SCALOP representatives full members of the Council or advisors to their MNAP, with MNAPs being the only true members of the Council?.

First question: what do the National Antarctic Programs do and should operational matters have primacy within COMNAP?

There was a majority support for the views expressed earlier by the Chair and Past-Chair. National Programs' primary objective was to support and manage scientific research in the Antarctic, not logistics and operations. Managers got together to help each other working towards this objective, not just to help their operational staff doing their job. It was important not to be controlled by the logistics, which is strictly an instrument in support of science, albeit a very important one.

Second question: is the current prominent status of SCALOP within COMNAP, as acknowledged in the draft Rules of Procedure, still justified and/or desirable?

The Past-Chair noted that after 20 years of existence, COMNAP reached a point where it was useful to build something clear and reflecting the reality of how COMNAP and the National Programs had evolved. Things have changed and it is probably the right time to underline the transition of SCALOP from a SCAR group to a COMNAP group.

He reiterated that he would not want to see COMNAP restricted mostly to logistics – National

Programs were also involved in activities such as scientific coordination, implementation of science programmes, environmental protection, etc...

In reality, the majority of National Programs were structured around this and would often have, in parallel and at the same level, departments for logistics and operation; for science coordination; for environment or for communication.

It would make sense to align with this reality and match the structure of COMNAP subsidiary bodies with that of many National Programs: if we have a standing committee on logistics and operations, why not also one on environment, one on science coordination or one on communication?

The Chair acknowledged the reality of such structures within National Programs, noting that in the case of his Program he had even moved the department of logistics and operations within the department of scientific coordination for improved effectiveness.

Most agreed that mentioning only one subsidiary body in the constitution, one dealing with logistics and operations, and having in EXCOM only one representative of a subsidiary body, one dealing with logistics and operations, could only contribute to a bias towards logistics and operations. The SCALOP Chair remarked that it was his understanding that COMNAP was not a science organisation, but one focused on operations, logistics and broader support issues as defined by the work it actually does; he was also aware that others, like him, would not wish COMNAP to take on tasks, such as coordinating science, that are the role of SCAR. It was noted however that while all 29 member National Programs had a national role in managing science, four member National Programs did not operate vessels or aircraft, with three of these Programs not even operating a station.

All agreed that there were solid grounds for the introduction of at least one other standing committee, one on environment, at the same level than SCALOP, if we kept the concept of standing committees.

It was also agreed that there could be merit and advantages in introducing a system whereby EXCOM could invite a small number of 'experts' to its meetings, as and when needed depending on topics to be addressed at a particular meeting, whether instead of, or in addition to, representatives of one or more standing committees.

This would be discussed further under agenda item 5.3 “Structure of COMNAP groups and terminology”.

Third question: are SCALOP representatives full members of the Council or advisors to their MNAP, with MNAPs being the only true members of the Council?

The SCALOP Chair noted that at the moment it was not clearly written and defined whether or not SCALOP representatives were members of the “Council” or not. The situation should be clarified, whatever it is. He noted that the common practice had been to have two persons per Program around the table at plenary meetings – the MNAP and its nominated SCALOP representative.

It was noted that MNAPs held the voting right for their Program in Council meetings and that the second person alongside them in a plenary meeting would usually be the member of their staff

most suitable to support them at any particular time, whether or not it was their SCALOP representative. If “Council” was to describe the decision-making assembly, then only MNAPs were true members of the “Council”. There had been some confusion in the past about the distinction between “COMNAP” on the one hand, and the “Council” as COMNAP's decision-making assembly on the other hand.

The Chair noted that the new wording used by Virginia Mudie in her proposed draft was very useful and an excellent improvement on our (EXCOM's) own draft. It goes back to using “Council” interchangeably with “COMNAP”, without restricting either to the assembly with decision power, simply referred to as “the MNAPs”. This was clear and intuitive and at the same time solved our problem: it made SCALOP representatives part of the “Council”, or of “COMNAP”, without any risk of giving the false impression that they had decision-making power in COMNAP matters.

It was agreed that this new wording was very useful and should be proposed in the next draft of the constitution.

Additional question: are mandates on EXCOM nominal?

The majority understood that mandates were, and should be, nominal. This also matched past practices. When Dirk Van Schalkwyk left the South African Program before the end of his mandate on EXCOM, he was not automatically replaced by his successor at the South African Program.

Wording clarifying that mandates on EXCOM are nominal should be proposed in the next draft of the Constitution.

The way forward

It was agreed that the Executive Secretary should try incorporate comments received from members, including those embedded in the two drafts proposed by Virginia Mudie and Robert Culshaw, and the results of today's EXCOM discussions.

Executive Secretary to incorporate in the draft constitution all comments received from members and the results of EXCOM's discussions, starting from one of the two new, shorter drafts.

5. Strategic discussions - Internal COMNAP matters

5.1 Funding of members travel to COMNAP meetings or workshops

Ref:

Washington Action 22: National Programs to provide their views to EXCOM by 15 September 2007 on whether or not COMNAP should start funding travel and if so, how.

All comments received from members are consistent: funds should not be used to support members' travel to COMNAP meetings and workshops. The main argument was that it would be too difficult to manage fairly. Funding for travel should be restricted to either

- supporting attendance to a third-party meeting or workshop, when someone is formally asked to attend that meeting or workshop on behalf of COMNAP; or
- supporting a secondment to the COMNAP Secretariat for work on a project of benefit to COMNAP.

All feedback received was clear and all agreed with this position.

Executive Secretary to advise the membership of EXCOM's conclusions on the issue of the funding of travel, and incorporate them into the Rules of Procedure being prepared.

5.2 Engaging members to contribute to discussions and papers

Ref:

Washington Action 18: Executive Secretary with COMNAP Chair to consider options for reminding members of outstanding tasks and actions.

Washington Action 19: Issue in October a timeline for preparations for the following ATCM and CEP meetings, including clear deadlines for drafting, reviewing and submitting papers.

It was agreed to:

- improve the simple, standard process for calling for comments through email COMNAP Notices – each Notice should clearly indicate a deadline, a reminder should be sent about one week before the deadline, and no comment should be accepted after the deadline;
- establish an easy to access area on the COMNAP web site showing ongoing and outstanding COMNAP Notices.
- investigate options for registering responses to Notices so as to allow individual Programs to check at any time the status of their response to any Notice;
- investigate options for building consolidated lists of meeting actions, group tasks and COMNAP Notices including options for customised versions showing only relevant entries - eg only tasks of groups one is a member of, only Notices that one's Program has not yet responded to;
- investigate options for emailing such lists automatically;
- trial a “Status Report” to be released every 2 or 3 months, to be both posted on the web site and emailed to members – this could include:
 - news from the Chair
 - news from the Secretariat
 - latest COMNAP Notices (indicating who provided comments)
 - news from groups

Lou Sanson developed a sample “Status Report” and it was agreed that the Secretariat would prepare a first Status Report on that model in November.

Executive Secretary to incorporate the proposed process for COMNAP Notices into the Rules of Procedure being prepared, and adopt that process for all future Notices.

Executive Secretary to liaise with the Chair and Lou Sanson in November to prepare and circulate to the membership a first "Status Report".

Executive Secretary to propose a mechanism to better follow and track actions arising from meetings, group tasks and COMNAP notices.

5.3 Structure of COMNAP groups and terminology

Papers:

Section 'subsidiary groups' in paper 06 (Current draft of updated COMNAP handbook)

The structure of, and relation between, COMNAP subsidiary groups can be confusing, and a number of inconsistencies have appeared over the years, including:

- Some "Working Groups", supposed to be set up for a limited time to work on specific tasks, have effectively drifted towards "Networks";
- There is widespread confusion about the relationship between Coordinating Groups and Networks; and
- There is confusion between membership of a group (with a commitment to contribute to its work) and access to the meetings and discussions of that group (right to know what the group is working on) .

The Chair and Past-Chair highlighted the need to clarify the structure of COMNAP groups, and to produce a simple diagram that would clarify and convey that structure.

All agreed that there were many things to improve. EXCOM was determined to simplify things, and in priority the governance model of Networks.

It was agreed to develop over the next few months different models of group structure for consideration.

A discussion paper would be developed and circulated to the membership ahead of the St Petersburg meeting, where a special topical session would be organised to discuss the issue. It may be a good idea to divide the topical session in two parts, one early in the week and another later in the week.

Topical Sessions

It was noted that the topical sessions introduced at the Hobart AGM in 2006 were very good and often more interesting and productive than the group meetings. Some believed topical sessions were the future of COMNAP and should be developed and supported. This was worth reflecting on this while developing a possible new structure (and rules of operation) for COMNAP groups.

All agreed on the value of the topical sessions and the importance of:

- identifying good and appropriate topics;

- ensuring that a suitable discussion paper be prepared for each topical session;
- providing enough time for the topical sessions; and
- ensuring that sufficient time is given to convenors of topical sessions to report to the plenary.

The topical sessions would help identifying “the things that we need, want to do or want to know”, and the work required would be translated into tasks and actions allocated to the appropriate person(s) or group(s). This would increase the potential for COMNAP to prioritise and address important issues as an organisation, with a number of persons and groups working in a more coordinated manner towards common objectives.

Lou Sanson to develop one possible model for the structure of COMNAP groups, taking into account discussions of the Cambridge EXCOM meeting.

John Pye to develop another possible model for the structure of COMNAP groups, taking into account discussions of the Cambridge EXCOM meeting.

EXCOM to prepare a discussion paper on the structure of COMNAP groups for circulation ahead of the St Petersburg AGM.

Executive Secretary to incorporate in the schedule of the St Petersburg AGM a 2-part topical session on the structure of COMNAP groups.

Executive Secretary to incorporate the proposed process for topical sessions into the Rules of Procedure being prepared.

5.4 Process for secretariat change-over

Ref:

Washington Action 03: EXCOM to call around December 2007 for expressions of interests from organisations willing to host the COMNAP secretariat for 6 years from 01 October 2009 – the call will be accompanied by detailed information on what facilities and services are needed;

Washington Action 04: EXCOM, around May-June 2008, to review and assess proposals received for hosting of the COMNAP Secretariat October 2009 to September 2015 and prepare recommendations for the COMNAP Council;

Separate proposals to host the secretariat and candidatures for the position of Executive Secretary

As discussed in Washington, we had decided to change the process for the change-over of the secretariat. The call for proposals to host the secretariat on the one hand, and the call for candidatures for the position of Executive Secretary on the other hand, would now be separate and organised one year after the other. The Executive Secretary would now be appointed about three months before he/she was due to start, rather than 15 months before.

COMNAP would not necessarily select and retain only one proposal to host the secretariat, but instead could initially retain a shortlist of several good, suitable offers. The call for candidatures for the position of Executive Secretary would then indicate that several options are possible for the location of the secretariat. It would specify the conditions associated with each location, and ask each candidate to indicate which location(s) they would be interested in.

This is intended to attract a wider field of candidates. The final decision could still take into account both the candidate and the location and associated facilities and services.

EXCOM confirmed its support for this process. As this was a new process, it was very important to manage to convey it very clearly to members when issuing the first call this year. It was in particular important to make very clear that several proposals to host the secretariat could be left open until we had selected an Executive Secretary.

Can the host be a National Program?

The previous process specified that any organisation wishing to host the COMNAP Secretariat had to be distinct from the local National Program. Was it necessary? The Executive Secretary noted that being physically located outside a National Program effectively meant that you were isolated if not lonely. However, his experience showed there were very wide variations in the way National Programs were structured and operated, as well as in their culture and focus. He believed that being physically located within a National Program office would make it very difficult if not impossible not to be influenced and shaped by that particular National Program. This would make it harder to understand and respond to the needs of other Programs.

It was agreed to maintain the requirement that the secretariat be not physically located within a National Program, but leave the door open for a National Program to be the supporting organisation that provides administrative/accounting support and employs and insures the Executive Secretary.

Employment and protection of the Executive Secretary

As discussed earlier under agenda item 4, the absence of a legal status for COMNAP was making it particularly important that the organisation hosting the COMNAP Secretariat employ and cover the Executive Secretary. This had to be a mandatory requirement, and should be clearly stated in the call for proposals.

Process to follow

The process we intend to follow is:

- Chair to call early January 2008 for proposals to host the COMNAP Secretariat for six years starting 01 October 2009.
The call should clearly explain the entire process to be followed, list what is required (eg an office, accounting/auditing services and employment of the Executive Secretary) and outline a number of desirable facilities or services. It should ideally provide a checklist that can act as a summary of the proposed facilities and services, for easy comparison between the different offers received.
- Secretariat to receive proposals until 30 April 2008.
- Secretariat to compile proposals and prepare a comparative summary of facilities and

- services offered, for circulation to EXCOM by 15 May 2008.
- EXCOM to review proposals and recommend to COMNAP a shortlist of suitable proposals to retain.
 - COMNAP to confirm shortlist at COMNAP XX in St Petersburg, Russia, on Friday 04 July 2008.
 - EXCOM to finalise details of call for candidatures for the position of Executive Secretary at its October 2008 meeting (Bansko, Bulgaria, 2-3 October 2008) – this will include the issue of salaries and possible adjustments for the cost of living depending on the location of the secretariat.
 - Chair to call by 30 November 2008 for candidatures for the position of Executive Secretary for six years starting 01 October 2009.
 - Secretariat to receive candidatures until 31 March 2009.
 - Secretariat to forward all candidatures received to EXCOM on 01 April 2009.
 - EXCOM to review candidatures and prepare recommendations, for circulation to all members by 15 May 2009.
 - COMNAP to confirm selected candidate at COMNAP XXI in or around Punta Arenas, Chile (probably mid-July 2009).
 - New Executive Secretary to commence on or soon after 01 October 2009.

Executive Secretary to draft a call for proposals to host the COMNAP Secretariat, for review by EXCOM, by 20 November 2007.

5.5 Any other internal COMNAP matters

None was identified.

6. Strategic discussions – current issues

6.1 Safety and liaison with RCCs

Ref:

Washington Action 12: Five National Programs from Argentina, Australia, Chile, New Zealand and South Africa to work together and with their respective Rescue Coordination Centres to discuss how COMNAP could best collaborate in a uniform way with the 5 RCCs. To be coordinated by José Retamales and Kim Pitt who will provide the necessary links with EXCOM, the Safety Working Group and TANGO Working Group.

Washington Action 13: Review the matter of liaison with the RCCs, IMO and IAATO at EXCOM's October 2007 meeting.

Washington Action 14: Secretariat to find the best way to engage IMO and an appropriate point of contact.

EXCOM confirmed its agreement with, and support to, the course of action formulated at COMNAP XIX in Washington. It was stressed that:

- We needed to support the five Rescue Coordination Centres (RCCs) with responsibility for parts of the Antarctic, which were part of a well established, internationally recognised

- system;
- The RCCs were and should remain responsible for coordination of search and rescue – the National Programs were not and should not be; and
 - Our focus was, and should remain, on supporting and facilitating a system that exists – and definitely not on re-inventing the wheel or setting up parallel and/or competing systems.

This should be kept in mind and adhered to. It was confirmed that the action formulated at COMNAP XIX would continue under the leadership of José Retamales.

Liaison with IMO

Lou Sanson advised that the New Zealand RCC had recommended that COMNAP liaise with IMO through its Sub-Committee on Radio Communications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR). Once we had a contact for that sub-committee, the Chair would write officially to COMSAR and suggest organisation of a joint workshop.

Lou Sanson to provide contact details for the IMO Sub-Committee on Radio Communications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR).

José Retamales to write to the IMO Sub-Committee on Radio Communications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR) on behalf of COMNAP to suggest organisation of a joint workshop.

6.2 Code of conduct for scientific field work

Ref:

Washington Action 16: National Programs to provide comments on the draft “Code of Conduct for Fieldwork in Antarctica” to ECG Chair Yves Frenot (yfrenot@ipev.fr) by 15 September 2007. Each National Program should provide a single consolidated set of comments – Each comment should clearly identify the relevant section/paragraph of the draft.

Papers:

Paper 08: Draft Code of conduct and comments provided by members

Meeting Paper 08 was not available. AEON and ECG were still receiving and processing comments received on this draft code of conduct prepared by SCAR.

Gérard Jugie recalled that discussion over the draft code of conduct at COMNAP XIX in Washington had been tense. It seems there had been some unfortunate misunderstanding.

Lou Sanson noted that his main concerns and discontent about the draft related to his receiving advice that this was not what the CEP had actually asked SCAR to prepare, that the code of conduct as it stood may not really be needed and that it would take National Programs significant time, efforts and resources to provide input to make sure it was workable.

Whatever the story may be between the CEP and SCAR, the code of conduct was being prepared for presentation to the CEP and the ATCM. We had to assist SCAR and provide practical, constructive input.

It was noted that the drafting of guidelines for the operation of aircraft near concentrations of birds a few years ago had clearly demonstrated how similar collaboration could produce useful, practical results that satisfied all parties.

In an ideal situation, our preferred option would be to present the code of conduct to the CEP and the ATCM jointly with SCAR. This would put us in a strong position. Unfortunately, this did not seem to be an option easily manageable at this time.

EXCOM to review ECG/AEON's forthcoming report on the draft code of conduct for scientific fieldwork and, depending on its conclusions, either work with SCAR to produce an acceptable draft for CEP XI or advise the CEP that the draft needs to be tabled at COMNAP XX in July 2008.

6.3 Health Register Database

Papers:

Paper 09: Health Register Database Project

Ref:

Washington Action 20: MEDINET to provide a full business plan about the Anonymised Database of Medical Events project to EXCOM by end of September 2007

Washington Action 21: EXCOM to review the full business plan about the Anonymised Database of Medical Events project and circulate to all members for review, along with its recommendations, to confirm a decision about further funding.

G rard Jugie recalled and stressed that such a Health Event Database and the analyses it would allow addressed a real, practical and critical need that had been identified by National Programs. This need had been one of the important drivers for the creation of MEDINET by COMNAP in 2003 and MEDINET's initial terms of reference specifically included "establish an anonymised database of medical events."

It was agreed that this project addressed an important issue and could assist all National Programs in improving their operations, potentially saving both lives and resources. It was duly noted that there would be no liability for COMNAP past the pilot phase, whether or not the project continued past this phase.

It was stressed that, through COMNAP contributing to the pilot phase, every single member National Program would in effect financially contribute to the project, whether or not it formally participated in the pilot phase and contributed data. It was therefore important and appropriate that the pilot phase generate "products" distributed to, and usable by, all member Programs. The project plan should specify this and incorporate a list and brief description of products to be delivered.

Executive Secretary to liaise with MEDINET to adjust the Health Events Database project plan, including clarifying what period/duration the AUD 140,000.00 usage license fees corresponded to and incorporating a mention of products to be delivered by the end of the pilot phase.

6.4 Weather modelling and forecasting

Ref:

Washington Action 08: Executive Secretary to liaise with Jordan Powers to clarify nature of forecasting products that could be made available to National Programs on request, and advise National Programs.

Washington Action 09: Investigate with the SCAR Executive how COMNAP and SCAR could liaise to support Antarctic weather modelling and forecasting efforts.

It was noted that weather forecasting was a very specialised area. It was agreed that while some National Programs may be involved in directly supporting research and modeling for forecasting Antarctic weather, COMNAP's interest in and involvement should be restricted to delivery of simple forecasting products useful to National Programs.

Accordingly, it was agreed that we should continue with Action 08, and that we would make clear in our discussions with the SCAR Executive that COMNAP's involvement in Antarctic weather modeling and forecasting was to be limited to the delivery of simple forecasting products useful to National Programs.

6.5 COMNAP Status with ATCM

Papers:

Paper 10: Note on COMNAP's current status vis-à-vis ATCM

As discussed earlier under agenda item 4, COMNAP does not have any legal existence and, as shown in Meeting Paper 10, its status vis-à-vis the ATCM is somewhat unofficial, with no standalone instrument recognising its existence and status, The current status is 'indirectly official' through a succession of ATCM report language elements.

Some COMNAP members have expressed the desire to see COMNAP's standing in the Antarctic Treaty System formalised, as it causes difficulties for them to pay membership fees.

We had agreed during discussions under agenda item 4 to incorporate wording in the constitution that would try to convey as much 'legitimacy' as possible, and be as suitable as possible in supporting a possible future endorsement by the ATCM.

EXCOM had also discussed briefly in July 2007 the possible merits of some kind of statement by the ATCM that there was an “expectation that National Antarctic Programs be members of COMNAP”?

This stemmed from the observation that we had two National Antarctic Programs (from Romania and the Czech Republic) that were active in Antarctica but were not members of COMNAP. It was

noted however that the only reason for this situation seemed to be that these two nations' Programs were not coordinated or lead by a clearly defined lead agency. On the other hand, the Canadian Program had not participated in COMNAP work and meetings for a few years, and it seemed to be caused by a belief that COMNAP membership was not bringing any benefit to their Program.

It was agreed that a good way to kill several birds at once may be that the ATCM formally state something along those lines:

Any nation with an active Research Program in the Antarctic was expected to

- ratify the Protocol (on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty);
- have a clearly designated Manager of its National Antarctic Program (MNAP); and
- be a member of COMNAP.

We would need to work on this with several Treaty Parties, which would propose it and/or support it at the ATCM.

It was noted however that this may not be possible until we had finalised and adopted the constitution. It was difficult to see all 28 Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties agreeing on formally recognising and supporting an organisation with no legal status and no clear, endorsed statement of its objectives.

José Retamales would seek Jorge Berguño's advice on if and how this could be moved forward.

José Retamales to seek Jorge Berguño's advice on the question of a possible formal recognition of COMNAP by the ATCM, including a stated expectation that any nation with an active Research Program in the Antarctic participate in COMNAP.

7. Secretariat operation and activities

7.1 Communications/Electronic Support Infrastructure

Ref:

Washington Action 06: Transfer COMNAP web site to the new version of the system in August 2007.

The Executive Secretary provided a brief status report. The new version was essentially ready. The content could only be transferred while the Executive Secretary was in the office and had sufficient time to support and control the process. This would be done once he was back in the office and had a reasonably clear desk – probably over November-December.

He noted that he had a small group of National Program staff standing by to provide feedback and assistance at the time of the transfer and to help validate and adjust the new system as required in the early stages of its operation.

7.2 Secondments to the secretariat

The first secondment to the Secretariat had just ended. Albert Lluberas, coordinator of our Training Officers Network (TRAINET) had worked four weeks on the development of an online library of training-related material. A significant amount of resources were now loaded into the library and tagged with a range of information that allowed useful cataloging and facilitated the search for material as and when needed.

It was noted we needed to find ways to assess what COMNAP web site resources were accessed and used so that we could prioritise in the future. We wanted to avoid spending considerable National Program time and resources maintaining resources that were not useful to, and used by, others.

Executive Secretary to propose options to log and assess what resources posted on the COMNAP web site were accessed and used, and how often.

7.3 Member visits

Papers:

Paper 11: Note on member visits

The chair recalled that EXCOM had last year agreed that the Executive Secretary should endeavour to leverage on his travels to visit members, with a focus on small or new members and on members that had had limited participation and responsibilities in COMNAP – this was important in helping us engaging members and responding to their needs and concerns, especially at the time we were drafting a constitution and updating our rules of procedures.

The Executive Secretary presented a brief report on visits made since last October's. This had included visits to 11 Programs, those of Argentina, Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, Ecuador, Finland, India, Peru, Russia, Ukraine and Uruguay. It also included visits to 5 members station: Escudero and Frei (Chile), Great Wall (China), Bellingshausen (Russia) and Artigas (Uruguay), traveling with the Uruguyan Program and accommodated at their Artigas station.

More visits were tentatively scheduled for the coming year. The feedback received so far was very interesting and useful. A report would be prepared for EXCOM ahead of COMNAP XX.

7.4 Antarctic Flight Information Manual

The Executive Secretary confirmed that the traditional pre-season revision had been issued (on 21-Sep-2007) and should have already reached subscribers. He noted that the processes to manage AFIM subscriptions were being improved. An analysis of the AFIM information format was under way with AIROPS Chair Giuseppe de Rossi. This was a pre-requisite to assessing if and how a parallel, electronic version of the AFIM could be put in place. The objectives of an electronic version would be to:

- reduce duplication of information and simplify the maintenance and update of information by National Programs – for example contact information contained in both the AFIM and the ATOM should be edited and updated only once in a single location;
- simplify the work involved in maintaining the Jeppesen-produced paper version of the

- AFIM, that will remain required for use in aircraft.
- provide National Programs with an easier and cheaper way to access the information contained in the AFIM in situations where a Jeppesen-produced paper version is not required.

Executive Secretary to forward to EXCOM a list showing who currently has and maintains AFIM manuals.

Executive Secretary to include in the Annual General Meeting guidelines under development that the standard list of meeting papers should include a list showing who currently has and maintains AFIM manuals.

7.5 Public Information – Frequently Asked Questions

Ref:

Kwalata Action 09: Executive Secretary to report on progress of the COMNAP web site's FAQ section at COMNAP XIX in Washington.

The Executive Secretary advised that this was still to do. Lou Sanson stressed that our information officers were in a good position to help us with this. Most National Programs were already addressing these issues and had developed FAQs. He offered, as chair of CEDAT, to facilitate and support the involvement of INFONET.

(once the new web site is up and running) Executive Secretary, in liaison with Lou Sanson, to work with INFONET to identify what information on the COMNAP web site should be made available to the public, and to prepare an appropriate Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section.

7.6 Finance

Papers:

2007-2008 budget - Appendix 4 of Paper 03 (Draft report of COMNAP XIX meeting)

It was noted that the allocation of a further USD 25,000 to MEDINET for the important Health Event Database would make us speed up our use of reserves. This was fine, especially for a project that could bring so many benefits to National Programs, though we needed to be aware of it.

It was noted that the end of the financial year was very close to the dates of the Annual General Meetings and that it made it very difficult to circulate a full, final financial report well ahead of the meeting.

Executive Secretary to include in the Annual General Meeting guidelines under development that a draft financial report had to be included in the meeting papers and provided no later than two weeks before the start of the meeting.

7.7 Production of COMNAP Annual General Report

Ref:

Washington Action 23: EXCOM to review at its October 2007 meeting the format and mode of production of the COMNAP Annual General Report.

It was decided that the COMNAP Annual General Report should now be produced in electronic form only, made available online through the COMNAP web site and if possible and practical provided as a CD/DVD, distributed either at the AGM or later.

It was every member's responsibility to print and bind whatever they needed.

The elements of the Annual General Report that it was most important to have available ahead of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) were:

- the annual activity report;
- a financial report;
- the list of actions arising from the previous AGM;
- the list of persons registered for this AGM;
- the updated list of past COMNAP meetings and officers;
- the current list of COMNAP groups showing their officers, terms of reference and tasks.

Executive Secretary to include in the Rules of Procedure under development that Annual General Report should be produced, in electronic form only, as outlined during EXCOM's cambridge meeting (under Agenda Item 7.7).

8. COMNAP Groups - Review of Membership & Tasks

Papers:

COMNAP Groups 2007-2008 - Appendix 5 of Paper 03 (Draft report of COMNAP XIX meeting)

The current list of COMNAP Groups was reviewed briefly. Most issues and questions requiring discussion had already been addressed under earlier agenda items.

9. Annual Work Plan

9.1 Current actions

Papers:

Paper 04: Consolidated list of current actions and tasks as at 01 October 2007

All current actions requiring discussion had been discussed under previous agenda items.

9.2 New Actions

All new actions had been clearly defined during the meeting and would be written up by the Executive Secretary as part of the minutes.

9.3 Joint SCAR-COMNAP business

Papers:

Paper 14: Draft minutes - Joint SCAR-COMNAP Executives' meeting July 2007

Paper 15: JCADM Report 2006-2007

It was agreed that the draft minutes of the Washington Joint SCAR-COMNAP Executives meeting were suitable and no changes were suggested. The Chair confirmed his satisfaction at the very positive and constructive atmosphere of that joint meeting.

9.4 Preparations for CEP-XI and ATCM-XXXI

Papers:

Agenda item 15 (paras 261-265) in Paper 03 (Draft report of COMNAP XIX meeting)

- ***COMNAP topical Working and Information Papers***

Papers:

Paper 12: Draft ATCM paper COMNAP International Collaboration

Two topical papers were planned so far

1. SCALOP lead – Information Paper on “International scientific and logistic collaboration in Antarctica”
2. ECG/AEON lead – IP on the results of the AEON survey on procedures to minimise introduction of non-native species

A draft of the SCALOP IP had been provided as Meeting Paper 12. All agreed this was a good and useful paper. The Executive Secretary noted he had some minor technical questions which he would forward to the SCALOP Chair. Both would liaise to put the paper in its final form ready for submission before circulating it to the membership.

ECG/AEON would provide a draft paper in the coming months.

SCALOP Chair and Executive Secretary to liaise to put the draft IP on “International scientific and logistic collaboration in Antarctica” in its final form ready for submission before circulating it to the membership.

- ***COMNAP Annual Report to ATCM and CEP***

The model used in the last two years for the COMNAP Annual Report was deemed useful and adequate and should be retained. We would submit it as a Working Paper and follow the same review process as for other papers.

Executive Secretary to draft COMNAP Annual Report for submission to ATCM XXXI and CEP XI as a working paper, and follow the same review process as for other papers.

- *Any other arising from previous discussions*

None had been identified at this stage.

- *Timeline*

The dates of the meetings were:

- ATCM XXXI: Kiev, Monday 02 to Friday 14 June 2008 (weeks 23-24)
- CEP XI: Kiev, Ukraine, Monday 02 to Friday 06 June 2008 (week 23)

Deadlines for submissions of papers were:

- Information Papers (IPs): Friday 02 May 2008 (week 18)
- Working Papers and IPs requiring translations: Thursday 17 April 2008 (week 16)

It was agreed to adopt the following general process for preparation and review of papers to be submitted by COMNAP:

- Groups submit their final draft to EXCOM;
- 2 weeks for EXCOM to review and adjust drafts as/if necessary;
- 4 weeks given to members to review these drafts – send reminder one week before deadline;
- 2 weeks for EXCOM and groups to discuss and incorporate comments and agree on a final text;
- 1 week given to members to check final text and give any last comment;
- 1 week for EXCOM to digest any last comments/concerns if applicable and finalise text; and
- 1 week for Secretariat to format and submit papers.

This corresponded to a total process of 11 weeks. It meant COMNAP groups were required to submit their final draft to EXCOM:

- 77 days (11 weeks) before the ATCM deadline for submission of Working Papers and of Information Papers requiring translations; that is
- 122 days (roughly 4 months) before the start of the ATCM.

The corresponding dates for 2008 were:

- 31 Jan 2008: Drafts to EXCOM
- 15 Feb 2008: Drafts adjusted by EXCOM circulated to all members
- 14 Mar 2008: Members have submitted their comments
- 28 Mar 2008: Final text circulated to all members for last check
- 04 Apr 2008: Last comments received, if any
- 11 Apr 2008: EXCOM has done any necessary adjustment and agreed on final text
- 17 Apr 2008: Secretariat submits papers.

This should be conveyed to the membership as agreed in Washington. The description of this general process should also be incorporated in the Rules of Procedure under development.

Executive Secretary to incorporate in the Rules of Procedure under development a description of the general process for review of COMNAP papers before submission to ATCMs and CEP meetings, as agreed at EXCOM's Cambridge meeting.

10. Future meetings

10.1 COMNAP XX – St Petersburg, Russia, 30 June - 04 July 2008

Papers:

Paper 13: Draft schedule and agenda for 2008 AGM COMNAP XX

- ***Draft meeting agenda and schedule***

The draft meeting agenda and schedule as provided in Meeting Paper 13 were approved. We just needed to move the presentation and reports of the topical sessions to dedicated agenda items, as discussed under agenda item 5.3.

As discussed in Washington, up to three workshops may be held: by AEON, ENMANET and INFONET. It was agreed to try hold all those workshops in the venue of our Annual General Meeting, the offices of our Russian hosts, AARI. The AEON and ENMANET workshops should be held in parallel on the week-end preceding the AGM, that is on Saturday 28 or Sunday 29 June 2008, and the INFONET workshop on the following Saturday 05 July 2008. This would maximise the chances of INFONET also holding alongside its workshop a joint meeting with information officers involved in the Arctic, which may attend the joint SCAR-IASC conference the following week.

Executive Secretary to liaise with Valery Lukin and with the chairs of ECG, CENMAN and CEDAT to try make tentative arrangements for the holding at AARI of AEON and ENMANET workshops (in parallel on Sat 28 or Sun 29 June 2008) and an INFONET workshop (Saturday 05 July 2008).

Executive Secretary to update draft agenda and schedule of COMNAP XX, including dedicated agenda items for topical sessions and mentions of AEON, ENMANET and INFONET workshops; and post on the COMNAP web site.

- ***Work plan for preparations***

We had already earlier resolved to organise a 2-part topical session dedicated to discussions on the structure of COMNAP's work, an in particular the structure of groups.

In view of questions raised in earlier discussions about what the nature and focus of COMNAP's mission were or should be, it was resolved to plan for another topical session on that subject, "the purpose of COMNAP". It should include the question of whether or not the scope of COMNAP's mission did or should include the issue of duplication of science – in the context of assisting National Programs identify costly projects that duplicated projects already supported by others.

Two other possible topics were flagged:

- Monitoring: should we, and how could we, improve coordination of environmental monitoring activities that are the responsibility of National Programs?
- What are the X more important things we want to know as Managers? - we could then figure out how to obtain answers to these questions, including who or which COMNAP group can find it out for us.

The idea of inviting keynote speakers to address members on chosen topics was discussed. It was agreed that it was a good idea worth investigating further. It would probably be best as part of a topical session.

José Retamales to consider further with EXCOM, ahead of COMNAP XX, the idea of inviting keynote speakers, in particular as part of a topical session.

- ***Election of officers whose mandates will expire***

It was noted that the mandates of the chairs of SHIPOPS (Manuel Catalan), CODAT (Lou Sanson), COMED (Mariano Memolli), TANGO (José Retamales) and IPYCG (Anders Karlqvist) were expiring at COMNAP XX.

- ***Joint SCAR/COMNAP Executives' meetings***

As traditional, SCAR will be hosting and chairing the meeting, and draft an agenda. The issues of (1) monitoring and (2) duplication of efforts were flagged as possible topics to suggest for inclusion in the agenda.

- ***SCALOP Symposium***

The Executive Secretary was asked to establish and maintain contact with symposium host Valery Klokov and assist him as needed, in particular with initiating the call for papers, ideally before December.

Executive Secretary to work with Valery Klokov on initiating a call for papers for the 2008 SCALOP Symposium, ideally before December.

10.2 EXCOM meeting late 2008

Christo Pimpirev confirmed his earlier offer to host next year's EXCOM meeting in Bulgaria. The

offer was gladly accepted. It was agreed to hold the meeting on Thursday 02 and Friday 03 October 2008, providing this was possible for Kazuyuki Shiraishi.

Executive Secretary to check with Kazuyuki Shiraishi that he will be able to attend next year's EXCOM meeting in Bansko, Bulgaria, if it is held on Thursday 02 and Friday 03 October 2008.

10.3 COMNAP XXI – Chile, 2009

2009 ATCM was announced for April 2009 in USA. Any time past 15 June should be convenient for the COMNAP meeting. We should try to be in a position to confirm dates before or during the St Petersburg meeting.

José Retamales and Antoine Guichard to progress on plans for hosting COMNAP XXI in Chile in 2009, and try to confirm dates before or during the St Petersburg meeting

10.4 COMNAP XXII – Argentina, 2010

There was no need to start organising or scheduling the 2010 meeting at this stage.

11. Any Other Business

None

12. Close

COMNAP Chair José Retamales thanked all for contributing to this very useful meeting, and closed the meeting at 1300 on Thursday 04 October 2007.

Appendix 1: List of meeting papers

<i>ID</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda items</i>
1	Draft Agenda of EXCOM Meeting Cambridge 10-2007 (this document)	
2	Minutes of EXCOM Meeting Kwalata 10-2006	
3	Draft report of COMNAP XIX meeting	
4	Consolidated list of current actions and tasks as at 01 October 2007	
5	Draft COMNAP constitution July 2007 and comments received	
6	Current draft of updated COMNAP handbook	
7	Comments received 15 Sept 2007 on the question of funding travel	
8	Draft Code of conduct and comments provided by members	
9	Health Register Database Project	
10	Note on COMNAP's current status vis-à-vis ATCM	
11	Note on member visits	
12	Draft ATCM paper COMNAP International Collaboration	
13	Draft schedule and agenda for 2008 AGM COMNAP XX	
14	Draft minutes - Joint SCAR-COMNAP Executives' meeting July 2007	
15	JCADM Report 2006-2007	
16		
17		

Appendix 2: List of actions arising from the meeting

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Executive Secretary to check that we have no outstanding actions from previous years.....	2
Executive Secretary to liaise with the Chair and with past EXCOM member Jorge Berguño to propose some wording for the constitution conveying as much 'legitimacy' as possible for COMNAP.	4
Include in the call for proposals to host the COMNAP Secretariat a requirement that the host organisation formally employs and protects the Executive Secretary (including through both public liability and professional indemnity type insurance).	5
Executive Secretary to incorporate in the draft constitution all comments received from members and the results of EXCOM's discussions, starting from one of the two new, shorter drafts.....	7
Executive Secretary to advise the membership of EXCOM's conclusions on the issue of the funding of travel, and incorporate them into the Rules of Procedure being prepared.....	8
Executive Secretary to incorporate the proposed process for COMNAP Notices into the Rules of Procedure being prepared, and adopt that process for all future Notices.....	8
Executive Secretary to liaise with the Chair and Lou Sanson in November to prepare and circulate to the membership a first "Status Report".....	9
Executive Secretary to propose a mechanism to better follow and track actions arising from meetings, group tasks and COMNAP notices.....	9
Lou Sanson to develop one possible model for the structure of COMNAP groups, taking into account discussions of the Cambridge EXCOM meeting.....	10
John Pye to develop another possible model for the structure of COMNAP groups, taking into account discussions of the Cambridge EXCOM meeting.....	10
EXCOM to prepare a discussion paper on the structure of COMNAP groups for circulation ahead of the St Petersburg AGM.....	10
Executive Secretary to incorporate in the schedule of the St Petersburg AGM a 2-part topical session on the structure of COMNAP groups.....	10
Executive Secretary to incorporate the proposed process for topical sessions into the Rules of Procedure being prepared.....	10
Executive Secretary to draft a call for proposals to host the COMNAP Secretariat, for review by EXCOM, by 20 November 2007.....	12
Lou Sanson to provide contact details for the IMO Sub-Committee on Radio Communications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR).....	13
José Retamales to write to the IMO Sub-Committee on Radio Communications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR) on behalf of COMNAP to suggest organisation of a joint workshop.....	13
EXCOM to review ECG/AEON's forthcoming report on the draft code of conduct for scientific fieldwork and, depending on its conclusions, either work with SCAR to produce an acceptable draft for CEP XI or advise the CEP that the draft needs to be tabled at COMNAP XX in July 2008.	14

Executive Secretary to liaise with MEDINET to adjust the Health Events Database project plan, including clarifying what period/duration the AUD 140,000.00 usage license fees corresponded to and incorporating a mention of products to be delivered by the end of the pilot phase.....	15
José Retamales to seek Jorge Berguño's advice on the question of a possible formal recognition of COMNAP by the ATCM, including a stated expectation that any nation with an active Research Program in the Antarctic participate in COMNAP.	16
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(once the new web site is up and running) Executive Secretary, in liaison with Lou Sanson, to work with INFONET to identify what information on the COMNAP web site should be made available to the public, and to prepare an appropriate Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section.	18
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