



Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs (COMNAP)

Completion of Annual General Meeting (AGM) 37 (2025)

COMMUNIQUE for immediate and wide release (10 August 2025)

*Two highlights: 34th COMNAP Member National Antarctic Program approved
& new COMNAP Chair and Vice Chairs elected*

The Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs (COMNAP) held its 37th Annual General Meeting (AGM) with delegates gathering in Warsaw, Poland, 5–8 August 2025. Attendees were from all thirty-three COMNAP Member programs, two Observer programs, and from three invited stakeholder organisations. There were also many exhibitors on the margins of the meetings. In addition to the AGM, the 21st COMNAP Symposium “Our Antarctic Future” was held, with two keynote presentations, fifteen session presentations and twenty-eight posters.

The Colombian National Antarctic Program through its Manager, the Executive Secretary of the Colombian Ocean Commission, Commodore Juan Camilo Forero Hauzeur, presented the Colombian programs’ application for COMNAP Member status. Their application showcased the depth and breadth of their operations and science support. The AGM approved the application for Member status, welcoming them as the 34th Member National Antarctic Program of COMNAP.

The opening AGM plenary welcomed reports from the COMNAP Chair and the Executive Secretary and from Invited Expert delegations. During Regional Breakout Group Sessions, National Antarctic Programs exchanged pre-season information for Antarctic research season 2025/2026. The six Regional Breakout Group Sessions were Peninsula, Ross Sea, East Antarctica, Larsemann Hills Management Group, Dronning Maud Land, and the High Plateau. There was discussion in each on the unique aspects of those areas of operation and of increasing science support. There was also a continued focus on the heightened risk of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and proactive implementation to keep National Antarctic Program personnel safe and to prevent humans acting as vectors for the virus. Programs affirmed their commitment to continuing to consult COMNAP HPAI Guidance based on best available science to prepare their specific protocols to respond to this heightened risk and will continue their efforts in surveillance and testing, so we can have the data we need to understand the pathology of, and risk from, the virus.

COMNAP Member programs freely exchanged and further developed their expertise during topical Expert Group forums. Safety was a key focus across all discussions. The topics of air operations, marine platforms, environmental protection, critical technologies, education and outreach, and human biology & medicine, were all part of the AGM schedule. The marine platform forum also included a poster session to highlight the many new vessel builds and their science support and logistics capabilities. The Advancing Critical Technologies

Expert Group and the Air Operations Expert Group considered sustainable fuel options, availability, safety and suitability for aircraft and vessels and noted the importance of the COMNAP Alternative Fuels Taskforce.

The Joint Expert Group on Human Biology & Medicine convened a one-day meeting that included an online invited expert presentation from Professor Takeshi Yamaguchi, Veterinary Medicine, Tottori University, Japan, who provided an update on understanding of HPAI in the Antarctic Treaty region. The group also shared lessons learned from Antarctic medical incidents from the 2024/2025 Antarctic season and delivered an in-depth session with shared guidance on pre-deployment psychological screening criteria.

The preliminary statement of accounts for FY 2024/2025 was presented. The draft budget for 2025/2026 did not propose an increase in Membership fees.

COMNAP Chair, Professor Antonio Quesada, Executive Director of the Spanish Polar Committee, advanced the business of the AGM and at its close, completed his four-year term of office. The AGM elected Agnieszka Kruszezka, Manager of the Polish Antarctic Program to a three-year term as Chair. Pavel Kapler (Czech Antarctic Research Programme) completed his four-year term of office as Vice Chair and Walter Mac Cormack (Instituto Antartico Argentina) completed a one-year term as Vice Chair. Elected to the role of Vice Chair were Gianluca Bianchi Fasani (Italy's ENEA Antarctic Technical Unit) and Özgün Oktar (Türkiye TÜBİTAK Marmara Research Center, Polar Research Institute) each elected to a three-year term of office. Oliver Darke (British Antarctic Survey), Wendy Rubio (Chilean Antarctic Institute) and Shailendra Saini (India's National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research) continue in their terms as Vice Chairs. Michelle Rogan-Finnemore continues in her appointed role as Executive Secretary.

The Executive Committee of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) accepted COMNAP's invitation to participate in the AGM and the COMNAP and SCAR EXCOM's held a productive joint meeting on 6 August 2025.

The AGM confirmed that the COMNAP AGM 38 and the COMNAP Antarctic Search & Rescue Workshop 6 will both be held in Tromsø, Norway, (4–7 August 2026), hosted by COMNAP Member, the Norwegian Polar Institute.



Some of the attendees at the Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs Annual General Meeting 37 (2025), Warsaw, Poland, 7 August 2025. Photographer: Krzysztof Durkiewicz.